



Testimony on proposed legislation to increase funding for the *ConnectOregon IV Program*
Submitted by Martin Callery, Chief Commercial Officer, on behalf of the
Oregon International Port of Coos Bay and ORULE-Oregon Rail Users League
Submitted to the
Oregon House Committee on Transportation and Economic Development
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Co-chairs and members of the committee, for the record I am Martin Callery, Chief Commercial Officer for the Oregon International Port of Coos Bay, owner of the Coos Bay rail line. I appreciate the opportunity to testify today in support of proposed legislation, HB 4020 and HB 4028, to increase funding for the current *ConnectOregon IV* program; which will shortly begin project review, evaluation and ranking by the various modal committees and the Area Commissions on Transportation (ACTs).

The Port of Coos Bay received funds from *ConnectOregon* rounds I and III for rail and marine projects that benefitted private-sector users of the southwestern Oregon regional transportation system, and that helped create both construction jobs and long-term employment in the region. And in fact funds from *ConnectOregon III* have assisted the Port in restoring freight rail service in October 2011 for shippers in western Lane, western Douglas and Coos Counties. However, I want to state that the Port did not submit an application for *ConnectOregon IV*, although we could have easily invested additional funds in the ongoing rehabilitation of the Coos Bay rail line, and for marine infrastructure projects in the Coos Bay harbor.

The Port's purpose in testifying today is to emphasize the importance of the *ConnectOregon* program in helping modernize and expand the non-highway components of Oregon's multimodal transportation system. That integrated system is critical to sustaining the traded-sector component of Oregon's economy, whether its Oregon products being shipped throughout the U.S., or competing for trade opportunities in the international marketplace. Transportation sector jobs and jobs associated with transportation infrastructure development are predominantly well-paying positions that help Oregonians support their families and their communities.

In addition to my position with the Port of Coos Bay, I am fortunate to service on the Oregon Freight Advisory Committee, the South West Area Commission on Transportation (SWACT) and the Lane Area Commission on Transportation (LaneACT). I am also a member of several transportation advocacy groups in southwestern Oregon and statewide, including the Oregon Rail Users League – ORULE. And I have had the opportunity to serve on several *ConnectOregon* project evaluation committees; primarily freight, marine modal and South West ACT.

I can share with you that in every round of the *ConnectOregon* program there have been well-qualified and economically viable projects that were not funded. In a few cases project proponents have been successful in finding other funding sources, but for the majority of projects, the proponents have reworked their applications, worked to increase their cost share or found ways to leverage other funding sources to increase the competitiveness of their project applications.

Additionally, the Oregon Department of Transportation and the Oregon Legislature have continued to fine tune project eligibility criteria and the multi-level evaluation process to help insure that public funds are invested in the best way possible to benefit Oregon's economy and all Oregonians.

It should also be noted that in several instances, *ConnectOregon* funds have leveraged federal funds and/or private funds, resulting in significant non-highway transportation system improvements and increased bidding opportunities for Oregon businesses and increased job opportunities in Oregon communities.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 4020 and HB 4028. I urge the committee to support this legislation to help Oregon sustain its traded-sector economy and to help create jobs throughout the state.

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