

April 3, 2013



Rep. Tobias Read, Chair
Rep. Cliff Bentz, Vice-Chair
Rep. Chris Gorsek, Vice-Chair
House Committee on Transportation and Economic Development
Oregon Legislative Assembly

Dear Chair Read, Co-Chairs Bentz and Gorsek, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of The Oregon Primary Care Association (OPCA) I respectfully request your support of the dash one amendment to HB 3316. This amendment would provide an opportunity for TriMet riders to have a voice in how TriMet is operated.

OPCA is a non-profit membership organization comprising Oregon's 31 community health centers that operate 201 health clinics statewide. Our member health centers provide coordinated care to 330,000 rural and/or medically underserved patients annually. Our patients are primarily on Medicaid or uninsured.

Many of our patients rely on TriMet to travel to our health centers, yet riders and rider advocates are underrepresented on the TriMet Board. Additionally, in light of the current Gubernatorial appointment process, riders and rider advocates have limited opportunities to successfully advocate for greater representation on the board.

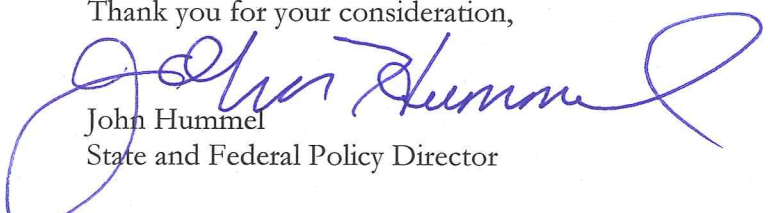
The dash-one amendment to HB 3316 establishes an appointment system that empowers local communities (Clackamas County, Multnomah County, Washington County, Metro, and the City of Portland) to each appoint two TriMet Board members. Such a system would provide an accessible, convenient, clear and responsive forum for rider and rider advocates to make their case as to how greater rider representation on the board would improve TriMet. And improve TriMet it would.

Community Health Centers were established by Section 330 of the Federal Public Health Service Act. This law requires a majority of each health center's board of directors to be patients of the health center. There is certainly more effort and attention required on the front end to orient and equip low-income, and otherwise marginalized patients to successful serve on a board than is required to equip doctors, lawyers or other professionals to do so. But the experience of our health centers is that this additional effort produces significantly better results on the back end.

The operations of our health centers, the patient experiences in our health centers, and the health outcomes achieved by our health centers are all positively impacted by the involvement of patients on our boards. We are confident that enhanced participation of rider and rider advocates on TriMet's Board would produce similar positive results.

Please vote YES on the dash-one amendment to HB 3316. Doing so will provide a meaningful voice to TriMet riders.

Thank you for your consideration,


John Hummel
State and Federal Policy Director