

**Testimony of Teresa Christopherson, Clackamas County Social Services
In Support of House Bill 3127
House Committee on Revenue
April 15, 2013**

Chair Barnhart and Members of the Committee:

For the record, my name is Teresa Christopherson, Administrative Services Manager, of Clackamas County Social Services. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today and testify on behalf of House Bill 3127, which would allow volunteer drivers to deduct from their taxable income mileage for using their personal motor vehicle.

Clackamas County is dependent on volunteer drivers, particularly in rural areas. 28% of Clackamas County residents live more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from fixed route transit services. For seniors and persons with disabilities, this means that they are too far away from public transit to use LIFT or other paratransit services provided by the various transit systems in Clackamas County for door-to-door service. With 13% of our residents being 65 and older, transportation is a key factor in allowing seniors to remain in their own homes and access essential services such as medical care and food.

In partnership with local senior centers, Clackamas County Social Services recruits and trains volunteers who want to help their fellow citizens. Volunteers driving for our Transportation Reaching People program last year logged 214,000 miles taking vulnerable seniors and persons with disabilities to medical appointments, grocery shopping, meals at senior centers and other services. The average age of a volunteer driver in our program is 67.5 years old. Many of our drivers are on fixed incomes and struggle when the price of gasoline rises. In a survey conducted in 2012, many of our drivers reported that they intend to continue volunteering but may have to limit their trips or the length of the rides they provide so they can afford to keep volunteering.

In the face of flat or diminishing funding for public transit services, transit providers in Clackamas County struggle to provide rides within their service district and are unable to meet the needs of those who live outside of their service districts. These riders are dependent on volunteer drivers to meet their transportation needs.

A tax deduction would assist volunteer drivers to continue providing services in the face of increasing fuel costs and support the needs of our most vulnerable citizens throughout the state of Oregon.

I urge your support of HB 3127 and thank you for your consideration.