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February 19, 2013

Oregon Senate  
Committee on Business and Transportation  
State Capitol, 900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Re: SB 247

Dear Chair Beyer and Committee Members,

My name is Gerik Kransky, Advocacy Director with The Bicycle Transportation Alliance. Our mission is to create healthy, sustainable communities by making bicycling safe, convenient, and accessible. I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of SB 247, Connect Oregon Plus with amendments.

Connect Oregon Plus represents the next step in a long history of Oregon's commitment to funding non-roadway transportation projects for the benefit of our economy. The traditional Connect Oregon program is focused on moving people and freight through aviation, marine, port, rail, and transit projects. Today we have an opportunity to discuss the economic benefits of expanding this program to include bicycle and pedestrian projects and transit and passenger rail operations. I encourage you to help us move this conversation forward.

Research shows that the construction of bicycle projects generates more jobs per million dollars than strictly highway projects.<sup>1</sup> When we build trails and bike lanes we put people to more people to work! The economic benefit of this approach extends beyond the increased construction jobs to include cost savings for people getting around.<sup>2</sup> From a dollars and cents perspective we can create more jobs and put more money in people's pockets with comparatively small investment in safe bike facilities and trails.

Over the last five years, Oregon has been discussing the best approach to dedicating funding to our complete transportation system. Last summer, when Governor Kitzhaber convened the Non Roadway Transportation Users Working Group, we joined in the conversation to help recommend stable and sufficient funding for non roadway

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<sup>1</sup> University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Political Economy Research Institute, June 2011. "Bicycle infrastructure projects generate 11.41 jobs per \$1 million while road infrastructure projects generate 7.75 jobs per \$1 million."

<http://www.peri.umass.edu/236/hash/64a34bab6a183a2fc06fdc212875a3ad/publication/467/>

<sup>2</sup> Evaluating Non-Motorized Transportation Benefits and Costs, December 2012. "In general, the greater the improvement, the greater the benefit per user, and the more users the greater the total benefits. This benefit can be worth as much as \$0.50 per user-mile..."

<http://www.vtpi.org/nmt-tdm.pdf>



transportation modes. Connect Oregon Plus represents the consensus we were able to build, but it is only a small part the work.

Some of you may remember Governor Kulongoski's Transportation Vision Committee from 2008. That committee's recommendations for the 2009 Jobs and Transportation Act include a proposal that closely mirrors SB 247. A quote from that report<sup>3</sup>:

*Allocate at least 15 percent of state lottery proceeds for investment in non-highway transportation (air, marine port, public transportation, rail passenger, and rail freight) infrastructure (page 19).*

We have an opportunity today to take the next step and ensure that we include all modes of transportation and consider the economic benefit and cost effectiveness of biking, walking, and transit, collectively known as active transportation. In addition to the long legislative history and list of benefits of this new approach we are facing a critical unmet need.

In 2012, Oregon's now defunct Flex Fund Program, which was a competitive grant application program to fund active transportation projects, received 105 applications for funding at a total cost of \$89 million with only \$21 million available. Likewise, in 2013 our state's combined Transportation Enhancements and Bicycle and Pedestrian Program received 155 applications for funding at a total cost of \$48.2 million with only \$8.6 million available.

Oregon's cities and towns are asking for help. We know that we can move more people with smaller investments, increase our return on those investments, and keep money in people's pockets. The economic benefits are clear. It is time to invest and build a more economical and complete transportation system for the future.

In closing, I appreciate the committee's willingness to hold a hearing on this important piece of legislation. Once we have our consensus amendments in hand I hope you will hold an additional work session on the bill and consider moving it forward to Ways and Means.

Sincerely,



Gerik Kransky  
Advocacy Director

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<sup>3</sup> 2008 Transportation Vision Committee Report to Governor Ted Kulongoski  
[http://governor.oregon.gov/Gov/pdf/tvreport\\_final.pdf](http://governor.oregon.gov/Gov/pdf/tvreport_final.pdf)

