

February 22, 2013

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

Re: HB 2310

Dear Chair Read and Committee Members,

My name is Jonathan Manton, advocate with The Bicycle Transportation Alliance. The BTA's mission is to create healthy, sustainable communities by making bicycling safe, convenient, and accessible. I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to offer comments today on HB 2310.

The traditional Connect Oregon program is focused on moving people and freight through aviation, marine, port, rail, and transit projects. I'd like to discuss today the benefits that could come from expanding this program's eligibility to include bicycle and pedestrian projects. I appreciate Chair Read's leadership on this issue as we work with LC on amendments that I hope you will support.

Research shows that the construction of bicycle projects generates more jobs per million dollars than strictly highway projects.¹ 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.² 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 transportation modes.

¹ 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/>

² 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.vtpe.org/nmt-tdm.pdf>



This session, we have an opportunity to ensure all modes of transportation are eligible for Connect Oregon. It is time we seriously consider the economic benefit and cost effectiveness of biking, walking, and active transportation. In addition to the long legislative history and list of benefits of this 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.

Thank you for your leadership and service to Oregon, and thank you for hearing my comments today.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Manton
Advocate, BTA

