

**Testimony of Randy Tucker, Legislative Affairs Manager
In Support of House Bill 2310
Committee on Transportation and Economic Development
February 22, 2013**



Chair Read and Members of the Committee:

The Metro Council supports investment in all types of transportation infrastructure. We participated in the work of the Governor's Vision Committee, whose 2008 report set the stage for the passage in 2009 of the Jobs and Transportation Act (JTA). That report also called for the development of a dedicated source of funding for transportation facilities and operations that cannot be paid for with highway fund dollars – a goal that remains unmet.

Metro has supported the *ConnectOregon* program since its first iteration in 2005. Support for another round of investment in multimodal transportation through *ConnectOregon* is part of Metro's legislative agenda is also a top legislative priority of the Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT).¹

JPACT and the Metro Council also support the concept known as "*ConnectOregon Plus*," which builds on *ConnectOregon* in three ways: it would add bicycle and pedestrian investments as eligible expenditures; it would provide for ongoing (rather than session-by-session) funding; and it would allow for spending on transit and passenger rail operations, not just capital. Under this concept, overall funding would be divided evenly between freight investments (air, rail, marine) and investments in active transportation (transit, passenger rail, bicycle and pedestrian). Metro has participated in the development of this concept as a member of the Oregon Transportation Network, which brings together a broad range of transportation interests.

In 2009, Metro led an effort to obtain funding for bicycle and pedestrian facilities outside the road right-of-way in the context of the conversation around what became the Jobs and Transportation Act (JTA). We introduced legislation known as "*ConnectOregon for Trails*" (HB 2902 and SB 635) that attracted bipartisan sponsorship and statewide support. Ultimately, this effort led to the creation in the JTA of the Urban Trail Fund. That fund received a one-time infusion of \$1 million that was vastly oversubscribed, demonstrating significant statewide demand for investments in trails as a legitimate element of a complete transportation system.

We urge you to support HB 2310 to provide for a fifth round of *ConnectOregon* multimodal investments. We also urge you to expand *ConnectOregon* to make bicycle and pedestrian capital investments eligible expenditures. We hope you will ultimately create a program along the lines of "*ConnectOregon Plus*" that provides reliable funding for the full range of transportation investments that support our state's economy and create prosperous, healthy and livable communities.

Thank you very much for your consideration of these comments.

¹ JPACT, which is comprised of representatives of the cities and counties of the Portland metropolitan region as well as state and regional agencies, partners with the Metro Council to make key decisions on transportation policy and funding for the Portland region.