

Testimony: Youth Transit Initiative (HB 2979) and State Transit Funding

Transportation for America is an alliance of elected, business and civic leaders from communities across the country, united to ensure that states and the federal government step up to invest in smart, homegrown, locally-driven transportation solutions – because these are the investments that hold the key to our future economic prosperity.

Transportation for America has created and launched a new network to support state efforts to fulfill their visions for economic prosperity by successfully passing state legislation to raise transportation funding while improving accountability and outcomes from these investments. A common feature T4A has seen among successful state transportation revenue packages is support from a broad coalition of stakeholders throughout the state, often stemming in part from broad multimodal options supported by the package.

T4A supports the Youth Transit Initiative (HB 2979) as a smart way to improve options for youth looking to access education and work opportunities. T4A also supports HB 2629 as a step in the right direction. To address concerns about cost of such a program, T4A can provide some national perspective on state roles in funding transit investment. T4A used the National Transit Database to analyze and rank states by their investment in transit for the years 2010-2012. Here are some key findings:

- The State of Oregon invested \$63,100,752 in transit or 9% of the total investment in transit in the state. Oregon would rank 26th among all states by this metric.
- The State of Oregon has made more capital investments in transit compared with other states, investing \$47,115,864 in transit capital or 24% of the total capital investment.
- However, transit agencies have indicated that operations funding is most critical for providing service to citizens. The State of Oregon supported just \$15,984,887 for transit operations or 3% of all transit operations funding in the state and ranked 37th nationally. To provide some more perspective on this, nationwide, states have supported 24% of the nation's transit operations or eight times the proportion that the State of Oregon provides.

Providing cost-effective access to school for all Oregonians both addresses the changing market preferences, technology and travel patterns of the young and old, while also improving Oregon's competitiveness to attract and retain jobs by ensuring our students have access to a quality education that prepares them for high-quality, Oregon-made jobs upon graduation. Investing in the Youth Transit Initiative will give Oregon a competitive advantage, and will also support the state's education and transportation goals – a win-win. Transportation for America believes that this investment is sound both for the short- and long-term benefits expected for the state, and is why we ask for your support today for the Youth Transit Initiative.