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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 3401
SENATE COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS AND TRANSPORTATION
MAY 13, 2015

Good afternoon, members of the committee. My name is Jon Nuxoll, 1500 Norkenzie Road, Eugene, and as a citizen and passenger rail advocate I am here to testify in support of House Bill 3401.

I wish I could have taken the train here today from Eugene. My work schedule and existing frequencies don't allow that, but even if they did, I would probably need to allow a cushion of about an hour to be reasonably sure I could be here on time to testify for the same reason I would leave an hour cushion if I were driving to Portland for something in the late afternoon: congestion. On-time performance is one of the biggest obstacles to increasing ridership on *Cascades* trains, which is why I am supportive of this bill.

In the past decade there has been much talk and excitement about high-speed rail, but not as much attention to the incremental, though less technologically and politically sexy, ~~incremental~~ steps to, ~~first,~~ higher-speed rail. There has been even less attention to the less technologically and politically sexy goal of reliable rail service, yet that was repeatedly cited by participants in ODOT open houses in recent years on improving Oregon passenger rail service.

Much attention has been focused on California's HSR program, but that is building on decades of incremental investment in more reliable conventional, higher-speed rail, and done in

meeting the freight-rail needs of the same Union Pacific Railroad that now hosts Oregon's *Cascades*. By redirecting focus on improving mobility and reliability for both freight and passenger rail, this measure is a big step to boosting reliability and, therefore, ridership. Similar studies were already in place in Washington in 2009 when stimulus money became available, but much of that money bypassed Oregon.

This incremental approach also promises a more efficient approach to increasing capacity and reliability, by potentially identifying new sidings and signaling—updating recommendations from a 1990s study which would have exponentially increased capacity far less than the cost of one freeway interchange—as well as providing for marketing, which has decreased significantly in recent years.

Oregon has made a good start in station renovations and *Cascades* equipment, but we are overdue for getting past the starting gate and growing service. HB 3401 provides an overdue look at infrastructure improvements that will help exponentially grow that service.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jon Trifone". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.