



TO: Chair Laurie Monnes Anderson & Committee Members  
Senate Committee on Health Care

FROM: Kim Curley, Community Outreach Director  
Commute Options, 50 SW Bond St. Suite 4, Bend, OR 97702

DATE: June 3, 2015

RE: Safe Routes to School

Dear Chair Monnes Anderson and committee members,

My name is Kim Curley and I'm the Community Outreach Director for Commute Options, a non-profit organization in Bend dedicated to increasing active transportation choices to encourage healthy individuals, a clean environment and a strong economy.

#### **ABOUT "SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL"**

Safe Routes to School started as a grassroots effort that spread world-wide. The goal of the Safe Routes to School Program is to assist communities in identifying and reducing barriers and hazards to school children, K-12, in walking or bicycling within 2 miles of the school.

The program works with the 5 E's as the key to a solution: Engineering, Enforcement, Education, Encouragement and Evaluation. SRTS brings together school administrators, teachers, support staff, parents, students, neighbors, police, and community service providers in School Teams and Community Task Forces. The School Teams and Community Task Forces study why more kids aren't walking and biking to school. Then they develop strategies to increase safety and the number of kids walking and biking to school.

#### **"SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL" IN CENTRAL OREGON**

Safe Routes to School started 10 years ago in Central Oregon. Encouragement and Education programs have been held in Bend, Chiloquin, Klamath Falls, Madras, Redmond and Sisters. Engineering improvements, like sidewalk infill, safer crossings and trail connections have been built in these areas as well.



The federally funded Safe Routes to School Program is administered in Oregon by ODOT's Transportation Safety Division. These funds can be used for education and encouragement programming, though not for engineering projects to make street infrastructure improvements. You can find the latest information, contacts and guidance for Oregon on Transportation Safety's web site at <http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/TS/saferoutes.shtml>.

Our Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Program is a comprehensive curriculum designed to teach K-8th grade students. Students learn the traffic rules and regulations, the potential hazards to traveling, and handling skills needed to ride safely through their community. It is geared to meet Oregon's statewide health and physical education benchmarks and meets the federal guidelines for Safe Routes to School funding. A series of corresponding optional activities are offered that meet reading, math, science, social science, and civics benchmarks. Safe Routes for Kids Bicycle Safety Program Curriculum

SRTS resources & activities help communities:

- Build sidewalks, bicycle paths & pedestrian-friendly infrastructure
- Reduce speeds in school zones & neighborhoods
- Address distracted driving among drivers of all ages
- Educate generations on pedestrian & bicycle safety

Participating in a SRTS program can improve the health of our children & community. That's an encouraging outcome for a lifetime. How do we do it?

Walking, rolling and bicycling to school can help students:

- Reach the recommended goal of 60 minutes of physical activity every day
- Arrive at school energized & ready to learn
- Leave the car behind & reduce dependence on fossil fuels
- Take an active role in their well-being
- SRTS is building relationships and local infrastructure

Working toward a safe route to school can help communities:

- Build a sense of neighborhood
- Encourage increased parental involvement at school & beyond
- Promote driving safely in school zones & the larger community

Number of participating students in 2015: 6,000



Bend:

Klamath Falls/Chiloquin:

### **STABLE FUNDING COULD MAKE THE DIFFERENCE**

School staff and parents have sincere interest in Safe Routes to School but don't have the extra hours in their day to make the programs robust. Funding is needed to have paid staff manage the activities and communicate with the community. Without this funding, an organized successful program is difficult to achieve. Improving safety of people who walk and bike in our community is also needed. Infrastructure improvements are expensive and often are competing with other highway and road projects for funding. A stable source of funding to create walkable and bikeable networks to and from schools is needed.

Safe Routes to School gets kids more active by encouraging walking and biking to school instead of riding in a car. Healthy kids learn better and many of our students in Central Oregon don't get the recommended minimum minutes of physical activity. Safe Routes to School creates more opportunity to get kids moving.

In the early years of SRTS, Central Oregon programs had twice as much funding as we do now. As a result we have half as many programs this year as we did in 2008, for instance.

We look forward to working with the Oregon Legislature in the future to collaborate on ways to create a stable funding source for Safe Routes to School.

Thank you,

Kim Curley  
Community Outreach Director, Commute Options

### **MORE INFORMATION**

Find more on the Safe Routes to School program in Central Oregon at

<http://www.commuteoptions.org/program/safe-routes-to-school/>

Find more about the Oregon Safe Routes to School program at <http://oregonsaferoutes.org/>

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