

**Testimony of Randy Tucker, Legislative Affairs Manager
On House Bill 2281
Senate Special Committee on Sustainable Transportation
June 24, 2015**



Chair Edwards and Members of the Committee:

As you know, Metro is the regional government of the Portland metropolitan area, with significant responsibilities having to do with land use and transportation planning as well as other matters of regional concern. We are the federally recognized metropolitan planning organization for the region and work closely with our local partners on transportation funding and policy issues through the Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT).

Leading up to the 2015 session, Metro devoted a great deal of time and energy to the development of a proposed transportation package through the process led by the Oregon Transportation Forum. The Metro Council strongly believes that a robust multimodal transportation funding package is needed to support economic development, community livability, and environmental sustainability in our region and across the state. We understand the difficulty of crafting a package that can pass, and commend the Legislature and the Governor for taking on this important effort.

However, the Metro Council is unable to support House Bill 2281 in its current form.

To be sure, there is much to like in the proposal before you. While the amount of road funding in the bill falls short of addressing the state's long-term needs, it certainly moves us in the right direction and would provide much-needed assistance to local governments in our region and elsewhere who are struggling with a backlog of maintenance. In addition, some of ODOT's share of new road funding would go toward projects in our region that are necessary to facilitate jurisdictional transfers to better align the ownership of certain highways with their function. The transit funding proposal in HB 2281 would represent very significant progress toward meeting our region's critical need for increased transit service.

Unfortunately, these improvements are only achieved in the context of a replacement of the state's Clean Fuels Program with alternative carbon reduction measures. To explain why this is problematic for our region, I would remind you that through the 2009 Jobs and Transportation Act, the state mandated that Metro develop and implement a strategy for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from light duty vehicles commensurate with the state's climate goals. We have spent several years working with our regional partners to develop this proposal, known as the Climate Smart Strategy, which was adopted by the region in December 2014 and approved by the Land Conservation and Development Commission just last month.

The Climate Smart Strategy assumes certain reductions in carbon emissions that are outside our region's control. These generally result from state and national trends and actions that lead to cleaner-running vehicles: for example, federal CAFE standards, changes in fuels and vehicles – and implementation of the Clean Fuels Program. The strategy then identifies actions our region will take to get the rest of the way to our state-mandated target, generally by reducing the need for driving: for example, urban growth management as well as improvements in local transit and in the management and operation of the road system.

To achieve the actual emissions reductions mandated by the state, we need ALL of the reductions attributable to the Clean Fuels Program, PLUS those that can be achieved through transit, smart planning, and more efficient operation of the transportation system. By reducing the climate benefits that will be gained from reducing the carbon intensity of fuel, HB 2281 “moves the goal posts” and will cause our region to fall short of the targets the state has established. This, in turn, will require us to adopt even more aggressive measures to reduce vehicle-related emissions at the local level – measures that are not funded and that might not have the support the Climate Smart Strategy currently enjoys.

Once again, while Metro cannot support the bill before you today, we would very much like to support a transportation package this session that meets the needs of both today and tomorrow. We commend you on the hard work that has advanced this proposal to this point and commit to working with you now and in the future as you continue the effort to support Oregon’s transportation system.