



February 7, 2016

**Clackamas County Board of Commissioners
Policy Position
SB 1521: Relating to Taxation**

The Clackamas County Board of County Commissioners opposes SB 1526, which enables mass transit districts to impose an excise tax on the employees of employers within their district.

Clackamas County currently has one mass transit district, TriMet, and three municipal transit agencies that service residents in our County. While the municipal transit agencies are governed by elected officials, TriMet is not. SB 1521 would enable the non-elected board of directors at TriMet to impose this excise tax on the employees of businesses within their district – raising roughly \$70,000,000 per year. We believe the employees of these businesses, many of whom do not use public transportation, would reject the fee if posed to them by ballot. Our fear is that the Legislature will not give employees that option.

Meanwhile, Clackamas County and many other local jurisdictions struggle to find dollars to maintain their roads. Our greatest tool to achieving these funding shortfalls is through vehicle registration fees and increased gas taxes. SB 1521 will make it challenging, if not impossible, to garner public support for these critical transportation dollars. Dollars imposed from SB 1521 will not improve roads or add critical infrastructure, but rather will increase the number of large buses driving over these failing transportation facilities that desperately need additional maintenance dollars.

We urge a “no” vote on SB 1521.

Please contact Chris Lyons at clyons@clackamas.us for more information.