



February 28, 2017

House Committee on Transportation Policy
Representative Caddy McKeown
900 Court Street NE, Room 431
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: Support for HB 2745 – Transit Funding

Chair McKeown and Members of the Committee,

The City of Sisters is supportive of a structure that provides communities the opportunity to independently develop transit funding while retaining the regional Cascades East Transit (CET) system under COIC governance. The City of Sisters supports the components of this concept that include:

- Allowing eligible ORS 190 organizations that are direct recipients of federal transit funding, authorization to propose property tax funded operating levies or other funding mechanism for transit operations within areas served by the organization, when authorized by the city council within the proposed taxing boundary.
- Granting eligible ORS 190 organizations the authorities and powers of transportation districts, as defined within ORS 267.
- Having COIC's board of directors authorized to serve as the governance body of the property tax funded system.
- Allowing the proposal for a voter approved operating levy only after both the COIC board of directors and the Sisters City Council took action to do so. The election process would align with the existing processes for establishing an operating levy within the district.
- Allowing the approved levy within the geographic area to be expended for the purposes specified in the measure only.
- Allowing the authority to propose different rates in different communities, allowing for the tailoring of service levels and local investment to align with community needs and priorities.

The City of Sisters recognizes and welcomes the benefits associated with this concept to protect the current system from becoming fragmented into multiple transit districts, for creating economies of scale, for assuring the development of each city's transit plan parallels the City's plans for development, and for providing the ability for each city to determine the most appropriate funding tool for transit.

The Sisters City Council will also send a letter to the Oregon legislature in support of changes to ORS 190.083 within the 2017 legislative session. This change will benefit the entire Central Oregon region while allowing control at the local level to expand transit funding at the appropriate time when each community sees fit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy Connolly". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Nancy Connolly, Council President