



CITY OF BEND

February 27, 2017

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Barb Campbell

CITY MANAGER

Eric King

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

RE: Support for HB 2745 – Transit Funding

Chair McKeown and Members of the Committee:

I am writing today to urge you to support the bill currently before the legislature, HB 2745, which will give voters in Central Oregon a choice on whether their local community should fund a public transit system. Of all of the Central Oregon cities, Bend is most likely to pursue the opportunity proposed in this legislation first and is thereby in strong support.

The City of Bend initiated a fixed-route transit system in 2006. But as a result of the advantages of regional coordination, we transferred operations of the system to the Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council in 2010. The efficiencies gained through this transfer have not only produced significant cost savings but have also created a more seamless link between Bend and surrounding communities. In fact, the system was expanded through a public private partnership more recently in 2015 to serve the growing needs of higher education and health care in our region. This effort was accomplished, in part, by taking advantage of COIC's existing and effective regional governance and operational structure.

Additionally, the City of Bend has been able to build levels of accountability through its current contractual relationship with COIC, which requires oversight from a Public Transit Advisory Committee as well as requirements for all service changes to be approved by City Council. We are open to formalizing these and other accountability measures through processes outlined in this proposed legislation.

HB 2745 offers a number of benefits to our Central Oregon Communities. It gives them local control -- each city can choose the appropriate level of service, funding amount, and service details for funding transit in their own community. It maximizes efficiency by retaining regional management for the transit system,

minimizing costs and optimizing streamlined and convenient service. It drives economic development, helping local companies attract workers by giving employees a public transportation option that saves time and money. Some communities may choose to ask voters to support funding initiatives, and other communities may not be ready any time soon. Giving Central Oregon communities the option to seek transit funding from voters is important to our region.

We strongly encourage the House Transportation Committee to support HB 2745's passage in this session. Thank you for your consideration of this very important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Casey Roats', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Casey Roats
Mayor