

March 1, 2017

**House Committee on Transportation Policy  
Rep. Caddy McKeown, Chair  
Oregon State Capitol  
Salem, Oregon 97301**

**Re: Support HB 2745, Allow Central Oregon to grow its regional transit services**

**Dear Chair McKeown and Members of the Committee**

As Chair of the Regional Public Transportation Advisory Committee, Cascades East Transit, I urge you to support HB 2745. This bill allows Central Oregon communities to invest locally in better transit service, as part of the integrated regional system provided by Cascades East Transit. It respects local and regional choice.

Central Oregon residents appreciate the attention of your committee, and the hard work of Chair McKeown and Rep. McLain and the Joint Transportation Committee. They came to Central Oregon last August to learn firsthand about the region's needs in highway, freight, and public transportation. This region faces daunting challenges, of fast growth and lagging transportation investment. Cascades East Transit is Oregon's largest transit provider without a dedicated source of operating funds, yet it is serving two of Oregon's three fastest growing counties, Deschutes and Crook (2016)

The Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council/CET is a unique transit provider. HB 2745 enables COIC to partner with local governments for stable operating resources. Bend's limited transit services now depend on a three-year pledge of operating funds from the City, major employers and OSU. Central Oregon needs better tools than this to grow its system.

Bend as you know is fast becoming a university town with OSU-Cascades. This is an historic State investment in Central Oregon's new knowledge-based economy, as Rep. Buehler noted at the campus dedication in September. The value of transit for Oregon universities is clear. Portland State, Oregon Health Sciences, and University of Oregon are thriving thanks to smart investments in both education and transit. Now it's Central Oregon's and OSU's turn. It's time to invest in an efficient regional transit system that provides community connectors, better city service in Bend and elsewhere, and new transit hubs. Then the region can get all those new OSU students to school and our growing workforce to work, without clogging all our city and regional road systems.

Your support of HB2745 is an important step for Central Oregon.

Sincerely Yours 

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CC. Sen Tim Knopp, Rep Knute Buehler, Rep Gene Whisnant, Rep Mike McLane, Rep John Huffman