

**Testimony to the Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On
Transportation and Economic Development**

on Senate Bill 5540

March 28th, 2017

Gerik Kransky, The Street Trust,

Dear Co-Chairs Johnson and Gomberg,

The Street Trust supports maintaining, and increasing, funding for the Oregon Department of Transportation's (ODOT) Passenger Rail Program. Without maintaining state funding of at least \$8.735 million Oregon will have to shut down Amtrak Cascades through the Willamette Valley.

One of the issues that legislators are working on this session is increasing revenue to address road maintenance, automobile congestion, transit, safe routes to school, safe biking and walking, and all modes of transportation. In addition to keeping passenger rail running in Oregon we urge you to please consider finding ways to increase the amount of state support for Amtrak service.

The Amtrak Cascades corridor from Eugene to Vancouver, BC accommodates some 800,000 passengers each year, with the Portland to Eugene portion accounting for about 15% of the total. As we consider spending over a billion dollars on a small handful of automobile congestion projects in the Willamette Valley it is easy to see how improving rail service to make it more frequent and reliable can be a cost effective approach to addressing congestion through the I-5 corridor.

We hope you will support ODOT's request of \$8.735 million, the minimum amount needed to keep our trains running. Thank you for your work and consideration of this important issue.

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