



April 28, 2017

House Committee on Revenue
Representative Phil Barnhart, Chair
900 Court Street NE Room 354
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: Support for COIC Transit Concept/House Bill 2745

Chair Barnhart and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Bend Chamber of Commerce, representing nearly 1300 members with 27,000 plus employees of a diverse business base, we urge you to support HB 2745. This will give Central Oregon voters an option to seek public transit funding specifically suited to the unique needs of the region.

A regionalized transit system managed by one entity such as the Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council (COIC) has the potential for maximum efficiency to assist with access to jobs, education, medical services and other transit needs between both our rural and more populated areas. Robust connectivity with each jurisdiction in Central Oregon is critical for the overall health of the region and, in turn, the State. Most notably, it relieves congestion on our burgeoning transportation system, which impacts state dollars on road construction and maintenance, and provides an innovative and flexible approach for local responsibility, including care for our rural communities.

One recommendation the Bend Chamber Board of Directors does encourage is the formation of a stakeholder advisory group for each district with supervision that continues to help through implementation (no matter whether or not a bond measure is passed), to account for spending and meeting plan goals. With this group in place, any update to the transit plan would be met specifically with participation and guidance from the jurisdiction in which the question is being raised. Growing and sustaining fair access to public transit around the region with a taxing structure commiserate to each district will take consensus and collaboration on the part of central Oregonians. Thus, a stakeholder advisory group role would help navigate the concerns and needs of the regional citizenry.

We encourage the House Committee on Revenue to move HB 2745 forward and support its passage this session. This clarification of ORS 190 provides many benefits to our Central Oregon communities.

Thank you for your consideration and for your service.

Sincerely,

Katy Brooks
CEO
Bend Chamber of Commerce