March 15, 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:

Transportation is one of the major barriers our students face in their challenge to pursuing their educational dreams at Central Oregon Community College. At the Transportation hearing in Bend last summer, one of our students (who lives in Bend) told her story of daily struggles with transportation and how important accessible and affordable mass transportation has been for her. For our students from Prineville and La Pine, from Warm Springs and Fort Rock, and those from all of the rural parts of our 10,000 square-mile District, transportation often is what makes it impossible for them to improve their life through college.

Therefore, I am writing 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 areas should fund a public transit system, allowing us to help solve our own transportation problems.

This clarification to ORS190 would allow residents of each city in our area to choose the appropriate level of service and funding amount. This would be an important tool for funding transit in these communities. It would also maximize efficiency by retaining regional management for the transit system, minimizing costs and optimizing streamlined and convenient service. It would help 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 at this time. This bill provides those options.

Please encourage the House Transportation Committee to move HB 2745 forward, and support its passage in this session. Thank you for giving local control of future transit initiatives into the hands of Central Oregon voters.

Sincerely,

Dr. Shirley I. Metcalf
President