



CITY OF BEND

June 5, 2017

Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue
Senator Mark Hass, Chair
Senator Brian Boquist, Vice-Chair
900 Court Street NE, Room 354
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: Support for HB 2745B

Chair Hass, Vice-Chair Boquist, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing today to urge you to support the bill currently before the legislature, HB 2745B, which will give voters in Central Oregon a choice on whether their areas should fund a public transit system.

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.

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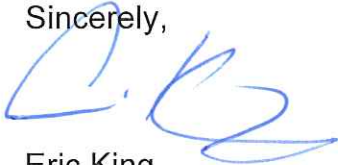
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CITY MANAGER
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HB 2745B offers a number of benefits to our Central Oregon Communities. It gives them local control -- each city can choose the appropriate level of service, funding amount, and tool for funding transit in their 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 ask the Senate Finance and Revenue Committee to support the passage of HB 2745B this session. Thank you for giving local control of future transit initiatives into the hands of Central Oregon voters.

Sincerely,



Eric King
City Manager