

June 6, 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.

From 2013-2016, I served as chair for the Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council (COIC) as a member of the Prineville City Council. The concept in HB 2475B was the result of several years of debate and discussion with regional leaders, economic development groups, chambers of commerce, nonprofits, healthcare, and other advocacy groups.

I believe a regional transit system is imperative to the long-term economic future of our rural communities. However, I've always maintained that local control is important and that a traditional transit district that covers the entire region at the same tax rate is unnecessary and inequitable to the rural communities. And why reinvent the wheel? COIC is already serving as the transit operator, which has proved very successful. Plus, the COIC board is made up of elected leaders from around the region. This ensures our transit system remains strong regionally and is represented equally by communities large and small.

HB 2745B offers several 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.

I 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.

Best regards,



Prineville City Council: 2012-2016  
Chair, COIC: 2013-2016