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**June 6th, 2017**

**Testimony on House Bill 2017**

**To the Joint Committee on Transportation Preservation and Modernization**

**Submitted by: Catherine Macdonald, Director of Policy and External Affairs, The Nature Conservancy**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2017. The Nature Conservancy is a global, science-based, collaborative conservation organization that works locally in more than 69 countries and in all 50 United States. The Nature Conservancy was incorporated in Oregon in 1961. We have over 50,000 supporters in Oregon with members in every county in the state.

The mission of The Nature Conservancy is to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends. Climate change is single biggest threat to nature and people. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions as aggressively as possible is critical to reducing climate change impacts.

The Nature Conservancy greatly appreciates the hard work you have done to develop a sound 2017 Transportation Package for Oregon's future. We strongly support the direction you have given to the Oregon Transportation Commission in HB 2017 to focus on reducing greenhouse gas emissions. We need to accelerate efforts to reduce emissions in Oregon. We support development of a "Traffic Congestion Relief Program" for the Portland Metropolitan Area along with investments in transit. The transportation sector makes up a major portion of Oregon's greenhouse gas emissions. We can't build our way out of congestion. We hope the final bill language directs the Oregon Transportation Commission to develop a comprehensive congestion pricing program – one that results in the most efficient use of our roadways. Pricing our roadways is the best long term solution to congestion.