

June 22, 2020

The Hon. Peter Courtney and Hon. Tina Kotek
Joint Committee on the First Special Session of 2020
Oregon State Legislature
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Legislative Concept 43

Dear Co-Chairs Courtney and Kotek, Vice-Chairs Girod and Drazan, and Committee members:

Thank you for your hard work tackling the challenges facing Oregon in this unprecedented time, and under these most challenging of circumstances. Your efforts are greatly appreciated.

TriMet generally supports the two key goals of LC 43:

1. Provide transit providers flexibly in using Statewide Transportation Improvement Funds (STIF) to preserve service in the face of dramatic revenue shortfalls; and,
2. Merge the Special Transportation Fund and Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund.

However, there are two issues that TriMet would like to flag, both in Section 4:

1. **ODOT administrative costs:** Section 4(1) allows Oregon Department of Transportation to pay for program administration off the top, with no cap on cost and at the expense of STIF recipients.

TriMet is concerned that ODOT will displace costs of operating the Public Transportation Division to the STIF program, where most of the work to distribute funding falls to the Qualified Entities such as TriMet and Lane Transit District.

2. **Projects of statewide significance:** Section 4(2) states that the OTC shall distribute the moneys to ODOT for “Projects of statewide significance that support the transit network and manage the operation of public transportation services.” Again, these funds are off the top and have no cap.

But even more concerning is the vague language. Could these funds be used for high capacity transit projects in the Portland Metropolitan area? Light rail operations? Lane Transit District’s Bus Rapid Transit projects?



TriMet has been at the table helping develop the STIF program, the STF/STIF merger, and the STIF flexibility concepts, and appreciates the hard work from all parties involved.

STIF flexibility is vital for many of the smaller transit agencies in the state, and this flexibility is extremely time sensitive. TriMet strongly supports moving this concept as soon as possible.

These are complicated issues, so if you have questions or would like more information please feel free to contact me.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

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