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STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
DISTRICT 20



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

February 7, 2019

Committee Members  
Committee on Veterans and Emergency Preparedness  
Oregon House of Representatives  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Colleagues:

Many of us have been receiving emails regarding HB 2209. I want to take this opportunity to emphasize a few critical points: before our initial public hearing today. To begin with, HB 2209 reflects the agreements of a workgroup – it is a compromise bill. All workgroup participants recognize the need for a meaningful step forward; all recognize the value of a sound policy that makes our state and communities safer, more secure.

HB 2209 is a work in progress. We have determined the framework for best practices in policy. Our hearing today is about the policy, not the way we pay for it – not yet. To that end, we will hear from the co-chairs of the workgroup, the participants of the workgroup – those that wish to speak, and then from the public at large. We are on track regardless of what others, especially those who have chosen not to participate, may say. Our plan has always been policy first, funding mechanics second.

Once we have consensus – as a committee – on the former, we can determine the methodology for adequately resourcing our proposals. Thus far, nearly everyone involved has dealt in good faith; it is my expectation that we shall continue the workgroup to resolve this last part of the plan. We are close, but we are not yet finished.

Finally, I want to ask for your assistance in sharing the reality of our circumstances. We are on a path to achieving the objectives outlined by leadership. But we cannot succeed if we allow certain and specific interests to thwart the hard work of so many. I want to believe the emails regarding our committee bill are the result of confusion, not the purposeful efforts of a specific agency, interest, or stakeholder. We must guard against the toxicity of falsehoods, half-truths, and/or lies spread by those with hidden, or not so hidden, motives.

We can accomplish good policy if we focus upon a couple of simple rules: 1) participants in a workgroup should be given the opportunity to solve the problem; 2) agitators should not be rewarded when they have decided to remain outside the workgroup process. Representative Lewis and Lively did fine work developing sound policy. Progress has been made, more progress will be made. I have every confidence that Representatives Lewis and Meek will work hard to bring us back a measure most – if not all – of us may support.

We, the Vice-Chairs and myself, as well as the participants of the workgroup remain committed to ensuring that rail and the users of rail invest in comprehensive plan for preventing, mitigating, and responding to hazards in a manner that is appropriate, fair, legal, and sustainable. For it is our duty, this committee, to present to our colleagues a measure that reflects both best practices in policy as well as a responsible way to pay for the programming we need to protect our people and place.

Please let me know if you have any questions or require additional information.

Respectfully,

Paul L. Evans  
Oregon House of Representatives (HD 20)