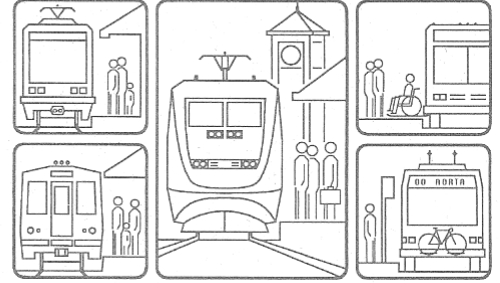


## Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates

AORTA • P. O. Box 2772 • Portland, Oregon 97208-2772

Also known as OreARP • Oregon Association of Railway Passengers



March 4, 2019

Joint Committee on Transportation

Hon. Lee Beyer and Hon. Caddy McKeown, Co-Chairs

Oregon State Capitol

Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: HB 2219

Dear Senator Beyer, Representative McKeown, and members of the Committee:

The Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates is pleased to see legislative interest commuter rail to Salem, as provided in HB 2219's study of extension of the Westside Express Service (WES) commuter line from the greater Portland area.

AORTA urges the bill be amended to include one rail-passenger advocate as a member of the proposed task force. We are pleased to see that communities along the route are to be on this, as is the Portland and Western Railroad. Improved mobility for passenger as well as freight rail aligns with AORTA's goals of a balanced and integrated system of transportation for people and freight within and beyond the State of Oregon.

We feel that it is also important to include a citizen member with background in rail issues on such a task force. Commuter rail does present different issues and serves different needs than intercity service, such as the Eugene-Portland-Seattle *Cascades*, and this is an important perspective that should be included in any task force.

AORTA -- Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates -- is a citizen advocacy group which has been working to educate the public about the need for safe, fiscally responsible, environmentally sound transportation since 1976. Our members recognize the need for balanced transportation services using all the modes appropriate for the area, the environment, the population served, and the funding available for such services.

AORTA is pleased to see this measure and, with an amendment to include a citizen rail-advocate on the WES-Salem task force, strongly endorses HB 2219.

Respectfully yours,

Jon Nuxoll, Eugene

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President, Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates