

Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates

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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 2603

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

The Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates sees any improvement in rail mobility for freight as well as passenger service as a step forward for Oregon's overall transportation picture. AORTA endorses any measure that provides policymakers with further information to that end.

It is our hope that any study resulting from this measure will be followed with action and funding – whether through contractual agreements, whether funding through ConnectOregon, whether funding through tax credits, whether through other means—to address interference problems. That especially includes, but is not limited to, finite infrastructure capacity, notably the single-track line through the Willamette Valley as population and freight and passenger needs grow.

Many of the ODOT Rail Plans completed during the past quarter century outline how to improve capacity along the corridor. There has been no significant capacity infrastructure investment in almost two decades. Until the legislature provides responsible funding for adding capacity in the corridor the service will not grow and prosper.

We welcome policy makers' interest in rail as indicated by this measure and hope that it, with completion of the state's study on a preferred Portland-Eugene routing, will lead to identification of and removal of impediments to greater mobility.

Respectfully yours,

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President, Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates