

March 18, 2019

Representative Jeff Barker
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR. 97301

Dear Chair Barker and Members of the Committee:

We write you today as local partners in managing our state's transportation system. Working together, we help people get from point A to point B as safely, equitably, and efficiently as possible. This is true whether people drive their own car, take a bus, ride their bike, or take a Lyft or Uber. We strive to create access to each of these options and to do so in a way that improves overall mobility throughout our cities, counties and state.

Given our commitment to accessible transportation for all, we have grave concerns with HB 3023. This poorly conceived bill being pushed by narrow industry interests would make it more difficult for communities across the state to provide safe transportation options that serve all residents fairly and reliably. We strongly oppose this bill in its current form.

Our transportation system has many challenges. Thanks to legislative leadership two years ago, HB 2017 drastically increased state funding. Yet we still face severe funding shortages for basic transportation maintenance and safety improvements. The Portland region also faces crippling congestion that impacts the economic vitality of the entire state.

Transportation network companies (TNCs) like Uber and Lyft have added a popular new transportation service to our networks. But there is also emerging evidence to suggest that they have created significant problems, including more congestion, unsafe pick-ups and drop-offs in busy locations, unequal access for people of color, low-income communities and disabled passengers, and using underpaid contractors who don't receive adequate education about traffic safety as full-time drivers. The rapid growth of TNCs is due in part to companies' willingness to skirt or break laws they find burdensome and fight regulation that requires them to serve the public interest in the same way that other transportation services are required to. This transportation option has been in Oregon for approximately three and one-half years and we are still learning about both the opportunities and the challenges posed by this new method of travel.

TNCs have a role in our 21st century transportation systems, and we want to provide our residents the freedom to use them in all our communities. The Portland region is the largest market in the state for TNCs, and local and regional agencies here already have policies in place to ensure that TNCs benefit the communities they serve. Our regulations for TNCs are guided by the following values:

- Ensuring public safety and consumer protections,
- Providing access to low-income communities, communities of color, and people with disabilities,
- Managing traffic congestion and reducing climate pollution,
- Creating a flexible system that can respond to a quickly changing and growing industry and that fits within the local context.

HB 3023 does not support these values. The bill will not protect consumers; it could undermine recent state investments in transit by supporting the expansion of services that draw riders away from transit; and it will make it more difficult to integrate TNCs into existing local transportation systems.

Communities across the state have requested rules that would allow them to introduce TNCs in their jurisdictions. We support creating a statewide framework that sets basic insurance, driver, and vehicle requirements for TNCs while giving local governments the flexibility to be nimble and manage TNCs for the benefit of their communities. We expect that as TNC service grows throughout the state other communities will experience many of the same issues that we are experiencing in our region. TNCs have the potential to benefit all travelers if they are guided by adequate local oversight.

HB 3023 undermines local governments' authority to protect their residents and safeguard their transportation investments. It asks that we trust industry exclusively to manage our private data and make decisions that are in the public interest and not just for corporate profits. Too much is at stake for each of our communities. Let's take the time to create a basic framework that supports the safe, efficient and accessible transportation system that our community members expect.

Thank you for your leadership on this critical topic. We look forward to working together to find the right solution.

Sincerely,

