

I heard much powerful testimony this morning at the hearing, and I want to add my voice in strong support of SB 395. I am a mother of a 3 year old, and a 5 year old, and I am frightened about the climate crisis and what unchecked global heating will mean for their future on this planet. With transportation accounting for over 1/3 of Oregon's GHG emissions, and car use rising instead of declining, we are at a critical juncture. I am sure I do not need to remind members of the committee of the overwhelming body of science telling us, urgently, that we need to lower our emissions drastically every single year for the next decade to limit warming to 1.5 or even 2 degrees Celsius.

Frankly, it is morally shocking that we currently spend only 1% of the state highway fund on pedestrian and biking projects. The dominance of cars, to the detriment and, most often, exclusion of any other method of getting around in this country, is inequitable and harmful. Oregonians need and deserve reliable, safe, easy and affordable options for getting where they need to go. Our current, car-centered system is none of those things. The absence of diverse, multi-modal transportation options is a de facto mandate that Oregonians must be able to afford to purchase, insure, store, maintain and operate a private motor vehicle. In the 1940's & 50's the automotive industry sold car-centered transportation to the American people as "freedom," greatly curtailing other forms of transit. But reducing choice is the opposite of freedom. Freedom from car dependency would materially improve the quality of Oregonians' lives, air, and climate. Raising the investment in bike/ped projects from 1% to 5% of the state highway fund, is, frankly, not nearly enough. But it is a meaningful step towards a more humane and livable future for all of us.

In closing I would like to share this personal note. I was recently reading a great-uncle's memoir of growing up in the English countryside before the Second World War. Chapter 3 is entitled "Walking, Bicycling, Riding and Cars," and in it, he describes the societal transition from walking and bicycling to cars thusly: "It was inevitable and a little sad that we should discover the petrol engine . . . They do make an appalling mess and to that extent were a regrettable advance."

Thank you.