

Good morning Co-Chair's Beyer and McLain, Vice Co-Chair's Boquist and Noble, and assembled members of the Joint Committee on Transportation,

My name is Bill Bradley and I am an Executive Board Officer with Amalgamated Transit Union Local 757. First, I would like to take a moment to thank the work of this committee. I had the honor of appearing before you last year in throughs of the COVID-19 pandemic, when it appeared our Transit agencies statewide were going to confront serious funding challenges due to declining tax revenues. When this committee was able to pass Senate Bill 1601, allowing STIF dollars to used to preserve transit service, it gave a much needed and appreciated tool. To that end, Trimet has initially proposed to utilize over \$40 million in STIF dollars to preserve transit service. The Federal response has also been strong, with Trimet receiving around \$370 million in Federal support thus far, with the potential of that number reaching \$600 million once apportionments for the recently passed American Rescue Plan are completed. Transit service is vital link for our communities, and it has been heartening to see such strong responses from our State and Federal leaders.

I am here today to talk about Senate Bill 429. This bill would require transit district with the service area the size of Trimet's to continue State Registered Apprenticeships in order to be eligible for STIF funding. This is extremely important, because a main tenant of the STIF program is to transition Transit fleets to low or no emission vehicles, like electric buses. Our industry is going to need to upskill current workers and create a pipeline for new workers for this new technology.

ORS 660.002 is the policy of the State of Oregon. It encourages the development of apprenticeships through cooperation of management, labor, and interested state agencies. It also promotes standards to safeguard the welfare of apprentices to ensure proper training of a skilled workforce. This bill will ensure that this policy statement is upheld and followed through on.

Trimet's current Maintenance Apprenticeships have been around since the mid-1980's. I'll focus on the Heavy Duty Bus Mechanic program for simplicity. The Heavy-Duty Bus Mechanic Apprenticeship at Trimet has been geared toward Diesel technology and is in need of an update to meet tomorrow's challenges. The uptake of zero emission buses will be accelerated not only by Federal Policy, but the availability of State Funding through STIF. Knowing that this transition will be happening quick, with Trimet's adopted policy of being a zero-emission fleet by 2040, it is imperative that the workforce be considered alongside the policy goals.

Trimet's current Apprenticeship programs not only produces skilled journey workers, but it has also created supervisors and managers. Some managers have gone on to run transit fleets in Oregon, Salem's for example, and some have been recruited to be Training Managers as far away as Kentucky. When Transit agencies across the State and Country recognize that these programs are producing quality workers, that is the ultimate stamp of approval.

You may ask, "Why a State Registered Program?" State oversight, through Oregon BOLI ensures that every worker is being treated fairly as they advance through the programs. The program is held to Equal Opportunity standards. Nationwide, heavy-duty vehicle maintenance is not very diverse industry according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, but Oregon Labor Commissioner Val Hoyle testified to Trimet Board of Directors in December 2019 saying "Trimet's Apprenticeship programs are among the most diverse in the State of Oregon." Apprenticeship programs offer the opportunity to Earn and Learn on the

job, which goes a long way to removing systemic barriers often encountered by marginalized and disenfranchised groups.

Having an Apprenticeship be State Registered is also important when it comes to applying for Federal grants. Just this last Friday, the US Department of Labor announced the State Apprenticeship Expansion, Equity, and Innovation Grants. These can bring in additional Federal dollars into the State of Oregon, up to \$10 million per grant. This can help improve and evolve the Diesel Mechanic program of today, into the Electric Bus Technician program of the future. With the Biden administration, there will continue to be additional grant opportunities for Apprenticeships through the Department of Labor, the Department of Transportation, and Federal Transit Administration. State registration allows Federal dollars to be utilized to improve Oregon's workforce, a True win-win.

For these reasons, ATU 757 believes this legislation, Senate Bill 429, is critical to continue to build on the foundation of the past to prepare for the future. I want to thank you for your time and attention on this issue and I am available for any questions that you may have.

Bill