

Dear Co-Chairs McLain and Gorsek, and committee members,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify about the importance of public transportation as well as bicycle and pedestrian-friendly streets here in Tillamook County. My name is Helena Birecki. I live in Neskowin, and my partner and I share a car. For that reason we often *have* to get creative about our trips, even for things as basic as doctors visits or shopping. We also *want* to use the car less— because we care about the negative impact of pollution on people’s health now— and in the future via increased climate change.

Specifically, I ask the Joint Committee on Transportation to:

1) Maintain and improve the safety of bicycling and walking on Highway 101:

- I rely on this route to, for instance, bicycle to the library and the community center in Pacific City or to my doctor’s office in Lincoln City, and share the route with fellow non-drivers.
- There is no other way to get from here to there, especially as the bus runs only four times a day. The shoulder is very narrow in places, and often covered in debris.
- I would **advocate for signs reminding drivers to share the road**, and (when the shoulder line is repainted) **the painting of bike sharrows to reinforce the legitimacy of bicycle traffic** on the street.

2) Support public transit locally, and connections from Tillamook/Lincoln County to bigger cities.

- While in a less dense area like Tillamook County the buses may not be able to run every hour, the availability of a bus for teenagers to get to an internship, for someone with a disability that prevents driving to run errands or go out for a meal, etc, is part of a Just and healthy Oregon.
- Though you can’t get there and back in one day, the morning Bus 4 to Bus 5 connection at least allows my partner and I to get to Portland for longer individual trips. And I know that reaching Portland can be essential for folks who need, for instance, to see medical specialists.
- The bus from Lincoln City which I used to take to get to Salem has unfortunately been discontinued. Could the state work with our local counties to see how that could be beneficially reinstated?

I recognize that even these simple requests require budget funding, and I request you seek **fair and equitable ways to raise money** to maintain and improve Oregon’s transportation system.

- We need progressive, not regressive, taxes and fees.
- We need fees that tend to reduce pollution, risks from collisions, and wear and tear on pavement.
- Funding streams should align with Oregon’s goals to reduce vehicle miles traveled.
- Funding streams should disincentivize wastefully* large vehicles which both cause more damage on the roads and have greater greenhouse gas emissions (even if they are electric due to the “embodied carbon”—emissions in the materials and construction of the vehicle). *If a vehicle is needed for the performance of particular work, that is not wasteful and should be taken into account.

The 2025 transportation package should seek to benefit 1) human mental and physical health now, and 2) reaching climate goals-- which is key to medium and long-term human mental and physical health.

Please prioritize equitably raising funds to spend on active transportation safety improvements, and public-and-para-transit across the state, and avoid Metro-area freeway projects that would just increase pollution..

Thank you for your consideration,
Helena Birecki
Neskowin, Oregon