

Utilizing Statewide Transportation Improvement Funds:

The Key to Sustainable Transit Services Along the Northwest Oregon Coast

Testimony for the Joint Committee on Transportation Public Hearing – June 18, 2024

Good evening, Co-Chairs Gorsek and McLain, Co-Vice Chairs Boquist and Boshart Davis, and honorable members of the Joint Committee on Transportation. My name is Mary Johnson, and I am Chair of the Tillamook County Transportation District Board of Directors. I'd like to welcome you to Tillamook County and thank you for visiting our area and taking the time to listen to the transportation challenges and opportunities in our area.

As an Oregon special district that was established in 1997, the Tillamook County Transportation District relies heavily on Statewide Transportation Improvement Funds to provide a variety of public transportation services throughout northwest Oregon, including local deviated fixed-route bus services, an intercity/commuter bus route that connects Tillamook to Portland, general public Dial-A-Ride, and non-emergency medical transportation services.

The District's mission is to "Connect Communities Through Sustainable Transit Services" and the services it provides are vital to our community and allow our residents to commute to work and school, travel for medical care and for shopping, and to stay connected to the community around them. To ensure that 'sustainable' remains a part of our mission statement, it is vital to us that any 2025 legislative transportation package include not only the continuation of Statewide Transportation Improvement Funds (or STIF), but additional investment to the STIF program.

While STIF has been an invaluable lifeline to Oregon's transit providers and has allowed them to somewhat absorb the difficulties of the past few years, increased funding could help advance the types of transportation improvements that Oregonians want and need. Enhancements that were intended with the passage of HB 2017 to improve, expand, and maintain public transportation services throughout Oregon. Innovative projects that can begin to make great strides toward a more equitable, safer, convenient, reliable, and resilient statewide transportation system.

TCTD and the community it serves has benefited greatly from the following STIF-sponsored projects:

Enhanced fixed-route and Dial-A-Ride services; a reduced fare program; short- and long-term transit planning and human service transportation coordination; and continued operating funds and capital rolling stock purchases.

With an infusion of additional STIF, it would enable TCTD to increase frequencies on high-ridership in-county routes; implement additional intercity Coastliner service between Tillamook and Portland; and advance efforts toward transitioning District vehicles to low- or zero-emission technologies.

By providing more convenience and reliability to the existing service and incorporating more of the types of services that our current and future customers want, the Tillamook County Transportation District can expand its reach by continuing to connect people to employment opportunities, medical care, and shopping and social needs. An expanded STIF can make that happen in Tillamook County and throughout Oregon.

Thank you again for visiting Tillamook County and for listening to our experiences.