

TESTIMONY FOR THE JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE HEARING JULY 16, 2024

Dedicated intercity transit funding must be included in the 2025 Transportation Bill. Intercity rail, bus and commuter rail have been overlooked as means to address Oregon's mobility needs for decades. Since the early 1990s millions of tax dollars have been spent on intercity rail and bus plans but never implemented. Dedicated funding would enable these plans to move forward and provide services taxpayers need.

Benefits include:

- Increased travel capacity in congested areas at relatively low cost using underutilized parallel corridors.
- Slows traffic volume growth on congested corridors by providing a low cost and low stress alternative.
- Reduces the need for expensive urban road and freeway expansion.
- Helps redirect more road dollars to essential rural projects.
- Provides reliable access to rural communities bringing urban and rural Oregonians together.
- Establishes a sustainable statewide network of trunk routes and feeder services.
- Compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Provides longer distance special needs transportation to medical facilities and other venues.
- Creates Jobs (Construction, Operations and Support Services) and access to jobs.
- Economic Benefits including increased travel between Oregon's cities, tourism and business opportunities.
- Tourism – Visitors arriving by transit contribute new dollars to local economies.
- Addresses the Equity Issue by serving the 30% of the population unable to drive.
- Stimulates Transit Oriented Development and creates more climate friendly, vibrant and equitable communities.
- Uses less energy, thus produces fewer greenhouse gas emissions per passenger.
- Requires less land for transportation.
- Railroad infrastructure is more environmentally friendly than roads by not creating large impermeable areas for stormwater and reducing pollutants created by personal automobiles.
- Suitable for eco-friendly propulsion systems and fuels.

Oregon was a national leader in the building of the Interstate Freeway Network. With a dedicated funding source, Oregon can again achieve national recognition in creating a vibrant 21st Century intercity transit network. This might be accomplished by adding a one tenth of a percent increase to the STIP payroll tax. These tax dollars will provide services that people can use.

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