

Dear Members of the Joint Committee on Transportation,

I am writing to advocate for essential increases in funding for public transit, road maintenance, and the establishment of a state-wide inter-city rail network, given Oregon's unique context and the challenges ahead. Our state's land use laws, coupled with the recently enacted Climate Friendly and Equitable Communities (CFEC) rulemaking, are poised to drive significant changes in urban planning and transportation demands. As Oregon's population grows and cities expand, the need for a well-integrated and efficient transportation system becomes even more crucial.

The CFEC rulemaking underscores the importance of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, promoting equitable access to transportation, and supporting sustainable urban growth. These goals will inevitably place greater demands on our urban areas and the connections between cities. As we work to accommodate these changes and fulfill the vision outlined in our land use laws, it is imperative that we invest in our transportation infrastructure to support this evolving landscape.

Public Transit Funding

Public transit remains a cornerstone of our transportation system, vital for those who depend on it for their daily activities and for reducing overall congestion and emissions. Increased funding is essential to enhance and expand transit services, improve infrastructure, and integrate advanced technologies that can make transit more efficient and accessible. By investing in public transit, we can ensure it continues to serve all Oregonians effectively, especially as urban areas grow and evolve in response to new land use and climate goals. Let's build on the success of HB2017 and continue to invest in this critical service.

Road Maintenance, Safety, and Alternative Fuels

Our roadways are critical to maintaining the safety and efficiency of travel across Oregon. Adequate funding for road maintenance and safety improvements is necessary to address the backlog of needed repairs and upgrades. By investing in regular maintenance and safety measures, we can prevent more costly emergency fixes, reduce accidents, and ensure that our roads meet the needs of a growing and changing population. This commitment is vital for supporting the broader goals of sustainable and equitable urban development.

Furthermore, investing in alternative fuels such as hydrogen and electricity is crucial for reducing the environmental impact of our road transportation system. By supporting the development of infrastructure for electric vehicle (EV) charging stations and hydrogen fueling facilities, we can encourage the adoption of cleaner vehicle technologies and contribute to Oregon's climate goals. This shift towards alternative fuels will not only help reduce greenhouse gas emissions but also support innovation and growth in the green technology sector. Oregon is doing a good job with EV's but is behind the ball with hydrogen. Hydrogen is a much better fuel source than battery electric for heavy duty vehicles such as freight and transit. Oregon cannot wait any longer to start this investment. Look to Washington and California for examples of what is already working.

State-Wide Inter-City Rail Network

The creation of a state-wide inter-city rail network represents a transformative opportunity for Oregon, aligning with our land use laws and the goals of the CFEC rulemaking. A comprehensive rail system would not only provide a sustainable alternative to long-distance car travel but also enhance regional

connectivity. The federal funding available for Amtrak and other rail initiatives offers a significant opportunity to advance this vision. By leveraging these funds, Oregon can develop a rail network that supports economic growth, reduces congestion, and contributes to environmental sustainability.

Rail transport is notably efficient for both freight and passenger services. It reduces the environmental footprint of long-distance travel and alleviates congestion on our highways. Additionally, a well-developed rail network can boost tourism and economic development by connecting communities and attracting visitors. Rail stations can act as catalysts for urban development, aligning with the state's land use laws and CFEC goals by encouraging the growth of vibrant, accessible, and sustainable city centers.

Investing in a state-wide inter-city rail network not only benefits our transportation system but also supports broader objectives of equitable and sustainable development. Rail stations can be integrated into urban planning strategies to foster vibrant, walkable communities and connect our cities in ways that align with Oregon's vision for future growth.

In conclusion, now is the time to invest in public transit, road maintenance, and a state-wide rail network. These investments are crucial for addressing the demands of a growing and evolving Oregon and for ensuring that our transportation system supports economic vitality, safety, and sustainability. Thank you for hosting state-wide listening sessions and gathering public input on these critical issues. Your commitment to engaging with Oregonians is vital as we work together to build a better future for our state.

Sincerely,

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