

Good Morning, Chair and members of the committee,

My name is Chelsea Taylor, and I live in SE Portland, Oregon. I'm a strong advocate for safe, accessible walking and biking routes, and I'm writing to express my support for increased funding for active transportation generally and specifically for the Oregon Community Paths program.

This year, I ran the Hood to Coast for the first time. This event has been a hallmark of Oregon for over 40 years, drawing thousands of people to rural communities and through busy urban areas. It promotes health and wellness, raises money for important causes, and contributes to the unique identity of our state. Yet, despite all the benefits it brings, runners are often forced to navigate excessively risky situations while also dodging roadside debris, encountering drug paraphernalia (literally running around piles of needles on the street), and sharing the highway with cars and semi-trucks— inhaling fumes and risking their safety. I want to see my tax dollars invested in safer alternatives not just for special events—this experience highlighted the issue—but for communities and for Oregonians to have a better quality of life.

Experiences like this highlight the urgent need for better infrastructure that supports these types of events while ensuring the safety of participants. I want my home state to invest in infrastructure that works in tandem with iconic events like Hood to Coast, providing safe, off-street paths as transportation alternatives.

The Oregon Community Paths program is essential in helping communities like mine build and maintain these multi-use paths, but the demand far exceeds available funding. In fact, the program has been oversubscribed by more than 4 to 1 in its first two cycles. I strongly urge you to increase funding for this vital program, ensuring Oregonians have safe, healthy, and sustainable ways to walk, bike, and travel.

Thank you for your time and for the work you're doing to address Oregon's transportation funding challenges. I hope that prioritizing off-street paths and active transportation will be part of the solution for a healthier and safer Oregon.

Sincerely,

Chelsea Taylor