

Good morning, Chair and members of the Committee,
My name is Chelsea Taylor, and I am with the Salmonberry Trail Foundation. The Salmonberry Trail will create a vital alternative transportation corridor, linking the metro area to the Oregon Coast. Our mission is to develop this multi-use trail to connect communities from the coast to the Willamette Valley, providing safe, accessible pathways for both local residents and visitors alike.

As we look at the transportation system, one of the most important needs for our state is increased access to off-street paths that provide safe, comfortable spaces for people to walk and bike. Trails like the Salmonberry are more than just a recreational amenity—they are essential transportation corridors that offer safe alternatives to high-speed and high-traffic streets, especially for families and commuters.

One path that comes to mind is the Banks-Vernonia Trail, which has been a vital space for both the community and visitors to safely enjoy nature while avoiding busy roadways. This is exactly the kind of infrastructure we need more of across Oregon, and it's why I urge you to increase funding for the Oregon Community Paths program.

The demand for active transportation alternatives is clear—across its first two cycles, the Oregon Community Paths program was oversubscribed by more than 4 to 1. Our communities need these investments to thrive, both for the safety of our residents and for the growth of our local economies through tourism.

In closing, I am grateful for the committee's work in addressing Oregon's transportation funding challenges, and I hope to see continued prioritization of multi-use trails and active transportation networks. These investments not only provide safe travel routes but also increased access to nature and all the health and wellness benefits that come with it AND economic benefits that are desperately needed.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Chelsea Taylor

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Chelsea Taylor (She/They)