

Honorable Joint Committee on Transportation Co-Chairs and Committee Members:

It was a pleasure to be able to meet with you during the listening sessions in Coos Bay a while back. I appreciated the opportunity to share some thoughts on transportation and how it is critical to tourism as a key economic driver in every single coastal community in Oregon.

As I mentioned during my comments in Coos Bay, public transportation can be a wonderful tool for reducing traffic and wear on coastal roads and highways, as well as those that connect our region to the valleys up and down the Interstate 5 corridor. Oregon Coast Visitors Association, my client, is operating a bus that transports visitors to the North Coast from the Washington County area. This park and ride type of format has tremendous potential to reduce traffic on highways, reduce emissions through coordinated carpooling and other benefits. This pilot program could easily be replicated up and down the coast, as many communities in the valley have ties to beach-front neighbors. This approach also would improve traffic safety.

In addition, our coastal communities are in great need of improvements and additions to our multimodal transportation infrastructure -- most notably pedestrian, bicycle and hiking paths and trails. The Oregon Coast Trail is one important piece of this infrastructure, which can be leveraged in certain places for recreation as well as travel to a specific location. Resources to the Oregon Coast Trail Foundation could help that organization bring in staff capacity to grow trail opportunities and spearhead fundraising for those efforts on the coast. One goal of that organization would be to staff a coastwide trail planner who could serve every jurisdiction up and down the coast in planning issues around improving and adding to the Oregon Coast Trail.

Beyond the Oregon Coast Trail, there is much more opportunity for multimodal transportation on the coast and we encourage development of that infrastructure to support forms of transportation that are low-carbon in nature, such as walking, bicycling, electric bikes and scooters and other options.

Transportation obviously is important to every industry to some degree, and tourism is no different. If visitors can't get to the coast or navigate our communities effectively and efficiently, it impacts visitor experience. When improvements are made to our communities that boost tourism, they also improve livability and benefit year-round residents even more than visitors. We encourage the committee to consider this particularly when looking at improvements for the coast.

Thank you for your time and dedicated service to our state. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Rick Osborn
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