

All Aboard **NORTHWEST**

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Testimony on HB 2691 February 21, 2023

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 2691. I am speaking on behalf of All Aboard Northwest, the passenger rail working group serving the Greater Northwest.

Throughout the world, passenger rail is successfully bringing significant economic, environmental and equity benefits to citizens and communities of all sizes. These benefits are greatest when there are seamless, door to door connections that include sidewalks, local transit, and intercity rail.

We need transportation that provides safe, reliable, frequent, competitive, and convenient passenger rail services that meet the needs of everyone in the region, including low-income, tribal, and rural communities, people with disabilities, locations where transportation alternatives are limited, and the thirty percent of the population that does not drive.

High speed rail can be one aspect of this network. But just as the Interstate Highway System does not replace state and local roads, high speed rail must be part of a statewide and region-wide rail transportation system that can be built relatively quickly and easily on existing infrastructure. Improving and expanding conventional rail will ensure the eventual success of HSR.

We don't need to wait for, and pay for, a wholly-new high speed rail system. Right now, there is an unprecedented amount of Federal funding available. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law offers \$66 billion in funding for rail. Let's take advantage of this opportunity, and build a passenger rail system serving the whole state and the entire region.

All Aboard Northwest also supports HB 2692. Thank you for your consideration.

Charles Hamilton
Co-Executive Director
All Aboard Northwest