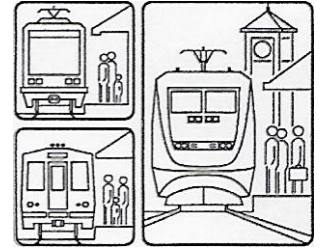


Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates AORTA P. O. Box 2772, Portland,  
Oregon 97208-2772 [www.AORTArail.org](http://www.AORTArail.org)



**Senate Bill 1572 — Testimony in Support.  
Presented for the Hearing on  
February 13, 2024**

The Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates (AORTA) supports passage of Senate Bill 1572 to study extending the WES commuter rail service to Salem. This proposed service would provide an essential link to the Northern Willamette Valley Transit Network. Intercity connections would be enabled to Marion, Polk, Lincoln, Washington, Multnomah, Clackamas, Columbia, and Yamhill Counties plus Clark County Washington.

The extension of WES will offer many social and economic benefits to the region.

1. It will take trips off the I-5 freeway and Highway 217 potentially serving more than 10% of the corridor trips. As I-5 and 217 become more congested the train becomes an attractive option to driving. Rail infrastructure comes at a much lower cost than building urban freeway lanes to add capacity. Once upgraded, it is easy to add rail capacity with longer trains and additional trains.
2. Equity issues are addressed, providing mobility options for low income, disabled, students and others unable to drive and/or own a motor vehicle.
3. Upgrading existing infrastructure takes advantage of latent capacity without negatively impacting the property tax base.
4. Provides jobs and access to jobs and expands the area for workforce development.
5. It will reduce travel time by eliminating the bus/train transfer at Wilsonville and the impact of I-5 traffic congestion.
6. Addresses safety issues with infrastructure improvements and public education. Areas in Salem like Front Street and the Northeast district will receive special attention.

7. Reduces parking requirements for businesses, public agencies and the Capitol Mall. Parking is not needed for people arriving by transit.
8. Connects with local transit for better regional access.
9. Tourism is an economic benefit of rail transit. Recreational riders will spend money with local businesses and restaurants. It is a stimulus for bringing fresh dollars into a community.
10. Train travel is psychologically more appealing than riding buses. It provides an attractive alternative to driving. The WES extension will stimulate more patronage on the entire network. There will be a significant increase in ridership over the current IX *Salem-Wilsonville* Bus operated by Cherriots and SMART.
11. Freight trains will operate more efficiently and safely using the upgraded infrastructure.
12. Supports potential future development of a freight transload facility at Brooks.

Testimony submitted by:

Robert E. Krebs, AORTA, Immediate Past President – Salem OR Resident  
Former: Salem Area Mass Transit District (Cherriots) Elected Director, ODOT  
Passenger Rail Coordinator and Oregon Business Owner

As a passenger transportation/tourism professional with over 50 years of management experience in the industry, I along with AORTA urge passage of this legislation (SB 1572).