

Submitter: Donna Bleiler  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation  
Measure: SB1572

I OPPOSE WASTING \$500,000 AND PEOPLE'S TIME FOR SOMETHING THAT IS SURE TO BE A TAXPAYER FUNDED TRAIN.

Population reports still are not showing an increase that would support another mode of transportation in the northern valley. In 2022 TriMet struggled with driver shortage, and the year before they altered schedules for lack of riders during the pandemic.

Amtrak train from Salem to Portland costs \$7 - \$13 for a 1 hour and 30 minute ride, available four times a day. There is also a bus that runs the same route. To compete with drivers, the rates from Eugene to Portland were slashed 30 percent last December. Ridership dropped dramatically in April 2020 due to the pandemic closures. In 2021, the year ended regaining their 2020 ridership, but 2022 still ran 11 percent below pre-pandemic levels.

Amtrak's experience trying to pry drivers from behind the wheel isn't going to change with another train service, and if it divides ridership, it won't be sustainable for either. ODOT was also having conversations with Washington State Department of Transportation for a corridor between Portland and Vancouver, British Columbia.

The push to get drivers off the road seems to be driven by cost - lower cost to riders, higher gas prices, and then add tolling costs. This seems to be more about infrastructure in preparation for 15-minute cities and banning fuel vehicles. What is a new train going to be fueled with? The only thing that will make another train viable is to take away the freedom of driving.