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On Behalf Of: MCAT Transportation Committee
Committee: Joint Interim Committee On Transportation
Funding
Measure, Appointment or Topic: LC 2

We, the MCAT Transportation Committee (Mobilizing Climate Action Together), are writing in support of passing this stopgap bill to sustain maintenance and safety of our transportation system at current levels of function. We view this as a stopgap measure as it does not adequately address the need for increased transit, the build out of adequate rail (both freight and passenger), important safety measures such as Safe Routes to School and Great Streets, and emissions accountability.

Despite the outcry against additional taxes, Oregonians want and need a smoothly functioning transportation system to maintain economic vigor. Oregon ranks in the middle of western states for transportation expenditures, per the Oregon Journalism Project. Given that we have so many more bridges, our funding allocations should actually be higher than other states.

We applaud the inclusion of increased funding for the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) for transit. While this increase is a step in the right direction, it is unlikely to be sufficient to maintain current service levels over the long term, leaving the many Oregonians who do not drive with fewer mobility options. We also support an increase in the gas tax and charging by the mile (or a flat fee) for electric vehicles and hybrids as necessary steps toward stabilizing transportation funding and facilitating the transition to less polluting vehicles.

To conserve scarce funding, the Legislature should put a hold on major projects given the slashing of Federal allocations, and redirect those monies to safety, maintenance and emissions reductions.

In later legislative sessions, we need EV infrastructure support, improved land use planning, enhanced rolling and walking infrastructure, and a modernized system of transit and rail. These measures will reduce wear and tear on our highways, reducing maintenance costs.

Thank you for taking these views into account as you act on the draft legislation this week.