

Submitter: Wendy Wagner

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Interim Committee On Transportation
Funding

Measure, Appointment or
Topic: LC 2

Dear Co-Chairs Fahey and Wagner, Vice Chairs Drazen and Bonham, and members of the committee:

My name is Wendy Wagner, and I'm a resident of Milwaukie, Oregon. Thank you SO MUCH for bringing forward this critical special session budget stopgap. However, I urge you to pass a real transportation package. This state desperately needs better, safer, and fairer transportation options that work for all Oregonians.

I'm part of two groups deeply impacted by the state of our transportation crisis: I'm an Oregonian who can't drive, and I'm also an Oregonian with asthma. More than half of all Oregon counties have diesel pollution levels that have a direct and measurable impact on human health. For people with asthma or lung diseases, that kind of air quality also has an immediate impact on our quality of life. We can't exercise, we can't work, and we struggle to take care of our families and live our best lives. Oregon desperately needs to be investing in infrastructure that cuts air pollution and creates more and safer de-carbonized transportation opportunities.

Everyone in Oregon deserves a chance to access jobs, healthcare, schools, and grocery stores whether or not they can drive. We shouldn't have a society that shuts out 30% of human beings -- and yes, here in Oregon, 30% of us don't or can't drive. That means more than 1.2 million people in our state aren't driving. We need to make it safer and easier for those people to walk, bike, and have effective mass transit options.

I know firsthand that without investment in walking infrastructure, pedestrians are not as safe as the people in cars. In December 2019, I was crossing at an intersection that local Milwaukie walkers had complained about time and again, but the cross-street was a highway managed by ODOT, who insisted there was no money for crosswalk improvements. I was crossing in a crosswalk in broad daylight, and I was hit by a car, breaking my ankle in two places. I lay screaming for help in the intersection, certain no one would see me and that I was going to be run over by passing traffic. That day, I thought I would die.

Later, I learned that just one week before my accident a man had been hit at the same intersection. ODOT still refuses to update the crosswalk to enhance sightlines for pedestrians crossing the highway. The city of Milwaukie has made that intersection a priority for its transportation system updates, but they can't get to it

without financial support from the state.

Oregonians deserve to be safe and healthy. That's why we need legislators to come into the next legislative session ready to work hard on an effective transportation package that actually does something to improve Oregon's air quality, make mass transit more readily available, and to create true pedestrian and cyclist safety. I urge you to remember that this budget stopgap is the bare minimum of what Oregonians require. We must come back to pass a transportation package that moves Oregon forward.

Sincerely,
Wendy Wagner
Milwaukie, OR