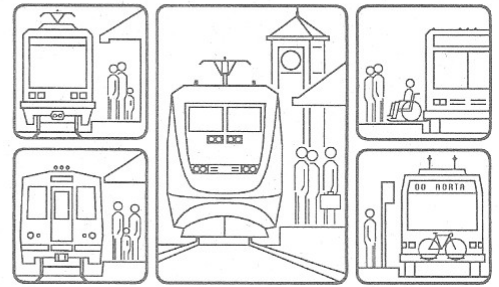


Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates

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Also known as OreARP • Oregon Association of Railway Passengers



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AORTA--the Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates--is a volunteer-run state-wide non-profit dedicated to advancing sound transportation policy in Oregon and nationwide. We reluctantly support LC2 for the special session because there is an immediate transit funding crisis in Oregon that must be dealt with now, and LC2 provides stop-gap funding that should delay short-term service cuts.

In other respects, this is not the bill we hoped for from the 2025 Legislative Session. Legislators must commit to reviving the uncompleted process of dealing responsibly with Oregon's transportation needs, with particular emphasis on equity and the environment.

This process must resume immediately, with a bill ready for the 2026 short session that among other things provides reliable dedicated funding for passenger rail service as part of a statewide public transportation network. We would prefer to see LC2 amended to ensure that in the near term, any increased revenue for the State Highway Fund is spent on maintenance and preservation, and that the percentage of existing State Highway Fund revenue being expended for maintenance and preservation not be reduced.

For passenger rail, the compromise the governor proposes to the Legislature is just the status quo that continues patchwork funding for Willamette Valley *Cascades* service, and none for service beyond Portland-Eugene ... especially Portland-Boise, lacking even one daily bus. The Kotek Administration actually proposes less for Oregon passenger rail than the Trump Administration does for Amtrak nationally.

This fails the 30 percent of Oregonians who do not drive, especially seniors or those moving out of homelessness who lack financial burdens even for a clunker car.

The free market is failing Oregon transportation. Express and mail service once carried by passenger trains and buses has been cherry-picked for decades. Removing mail service from passenger trains 50 years ago necessitated creation of Amtrak, and the express service that subsidized Greyhound service has been cherry picked more recently by Amazon, FedEx, UPS and more. Whatever the convenience to consumers, that has devastated transportation options especially in rural areas, as many testified in the last two years of statewide hearings and in AORTA's own outreach. Oregon, not even Portland, no longer has even an indoor waiting room for intercity buses ...where they run.

This further underscores the need to divorce rail and transit from ODOT, and we urge the Legislature to consider this, if not in this session then in 2026.

Jon Nuxoll (Eugene)
President, Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates