



August 27, 2025

To: Senator Wagner and Representative Fahey, Chairs, and the Joint Interim Committee on Transportation Funding

From: Oregon Developmental Disabilities Coalition

RE: LC 2 Relating to Transportation

To Chairs Wagner and Fahey, Vice-Chairs Bonham and Drazan, and Members of the Committee:

Access to reliable, affordable, and accessible transportation is fundamental to the well-being and opportunity of all Oregonians. Public transportation particularly is a lifeline for making access to opportunities and community life more equitable for people with disabilities. Reliable, affordable, and accessible public transportation connects individuals with disabilities to employment, education, health services, and other community resources. For those reasons, investment in public transit is one of the most valuable investments our state can pursue.

While LC 2 will help public transportation agencies remain operational, it fails to address many of Oregon's core transportation challenges faced by people with disabilities:

- **Oregon's disability population that relies on public transportation is growing rapidly.** Oregon is among only 11 states whose population of those aged 65 and older exceeds that of children under 18.¹ Of those individuals, one in three have a disability.² Increasingly, older adults and individuals with disabilities rely on public transportation.³
- **Persons with disabilities disproportionately live in rural counties that are underserved by paratransit.** The regions with the highest prevalence of ambulatory or other disabilities and need paratransit the most are the least likely to have it. Multnomah County, for instance, has a prevalence of ambulatory disability of 5.7%, whereas some of Oregon's most rural counties have at least twice that prevalence such as Baker County

¹ U.S. Census Bureau. "Older Adults Outnumber Children in 11 States and Nearly Half of U.S. Counties" (June 26, 2025). Available at <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2025/older-adults-outnumber-children.html>

² Center for Research on Disability. "Custom Table: Civilians Ages 65 Years and Over by Disability Status: 2023." Available at <https://www.researchondisability.org/annual-disability-statistics-collection/build-your-own-statistics-state-national-level-statistics>

³ Oregon Department of Transportation. "Oregon Public Transportation Plan: Executive Summary", p 3 (February 2019). Available at https://www.oregon.gov/odot/Planning/Documents/OPTP_ExecSummary_Final_Feb19.pdf



(11.4%), Harney County (11.7%), and Grant County (12.8%).⁴ Many communities--especially in rural and small towns--have no fixed-route public transit and therefore no paratransit as well.⁵ Where services exist, it's often limited and infrequent with long wait times and short service hours.

- **High service costs make transit unaffordable.** Many people with disabilities live on fixed or limited incomes. Transit fares, including those for paratransit, can be prohibitively expensive even when reduced fare programs are available. Proposed increases to the gas tax in LC 2--revenue that cannot be used for public transit--will drive up the costs of services even more.
- **Increasing the gas tax and DMV fees will disproportionately impact people with disabilities on fixed incomes.** While the proposed increase to payroll taxes is critical to fund public transit, the other revenue generating mechanisms in LC 2 such as the gas tax are regressive because it is a flat rate regardless of income. For individuals with disabilities who do drive, they tend to live farther from work or services; drive older less fuel-efficient vehicles; and have fewer alternatives to driving. Similarly, owning a car is not optional in many rural transit-poor areas where people with disabilities are more likely to live. As a result, they will bear the brunt of gas taxes and increased DMV fees.

We urge you to pass LC 2 to keep Oregon moving, but the essential work of providing reliable, affordable, and accessible transportation for everyone in Oregon continues. The approach of the Legislature to this Special Session has not been conducive to meaningful public engagement, and Oregonians expect a more inclusive and transparent process. Persons with disabilities deserve a transportation system that utilizes equitable funding mechanisms to serve growing need particularly in rural communities for public transit with affordable fares, reliable service, and increased paratransit.

The Oregon Developmental Disabilities Coalition (DD Coalition) is a group of approximately 30 organizations across Oregon that promote quality services, equity, and community integration for Oregonians with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families. Our members include the Oregon Self-Advocacy Coalition (a statewide coalition of people with I/DD or "self-advocates"), peer-based family support organizations, support services brokerages, advocacy organizations, and developmental disability providers and the DD Act Network Partners.

⁴ <https://disabilitystatistics.org/acs-census?indStat=1>

⁵ The Americans with Disability Act (ADA) only requires complementary paratransit services where fixed-route bus service exists. Since many rural areas in Oregon don't have fixed route transit at all, paratransit is not legally required under the ADA.