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On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Special Session Committee On Transportation  
Funding

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3991

Hi folks, I'm commenting on this bill because there are aspects I appreciate and aspects that are disappointing.

Public transportation funding is on the chopping block if our legislature doesn't do something to save it. A third of the state's population doesn't drive, either because they can't or don't want to. Situations like impaired vision, being too young, etc will severely limit their lives if our public transportation systems degrades. This will effect folks in small towns and more rural areas especially. The economic and health impacts will be significant if people can't get to their jobs or medical appointments.

According to the American Public Transportation Association, every dollar spent on public transit generates five dollars in economic returns. In the short term it acts as a direct stimulus because it pays for jobs and those workers then spend into the economy boosting demand. Less directly, it increases workers' access to jobs and businesses access to labor. Finally it decreases maintenance and road capacity issues driving up infrastructure costs.

Basically, removing funding for public transportation is shooting our state's economy in the foot. When recessions happen the last thing a government should do is tighten the purse strings.

The mega projects that PBOT insists on doing, while they have similar short term benefits, also incur increased maintenance costs down the road. These projects encourage more car ownership, miles traveled, and wear on our roads. We should rethink the mega projects. The bridges that need to be more resilient to earthquakes can be retrofit. The Rose quarter project can right size the project to what we as a state can afford, instead of quietly expanding the highway.

Fundamentally, PBOT should focus on moving people and freight as efficiently as possible.

Please ensure public transit funding is bolstered. It's not just good for people it's a fiscally sound decision.