

Testimony on HB 3992
Before the Joint Interim Committee on Transportation Funding
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VOTE TO FUND ODOT. Oregon's transportation funding is the lowest of western states. **Anti-tax rhetoric is not a solution** – it is amplified noise.

We need to maintain our investments. We **cannot** pave our way to mobility. Mobility for **all** Oregonians, and a **financially viable** transportation system, will be achieved when we recognize that **each mode** should be relied upon to provide the services for which each mode is best suited. (We cannot fix it today, but funding silos have forced poor decisions in addressing our transportation needs.)

HB 3992 does not take meaningful steps to address transportation, but it is the only option on the table preventing collapse and economic disaster. Rather than honest effort to address transportation needs, manipulation of the process by some legislators appears to be an effort to blame the “other side” for “raising taxes.” We must not let this noise, designed to sway votes of the uninformed, succeed.

Failing to maintain public transportation isolates the 30% who cannot drive. It disconnects people from jobs, health care and society. It **also** forces those who understand the benefits of public transit, **and those who should not be driving**, onto congested roads. “Car dependency” is a path to poverty for low income¹ – a path to congestion, increased infrastructure costs, service costs and societal ills for all.

ODOT promises to “fix it first,” but continues to put down more pavement – pavement we fail to maintain. We have a budget crisis, unfunded maintenance, because focus is on ***traffic flow, not transportation, not safety***. Road expansion projects are sugar-coated as “safety enhancement projects” – a pitch for more pavement. More pavement leads to more, not fewer, crashes - more injury and death.

We need **safe** transportation. Rail, passenger and freight, public transportation, bicycles and pedestrian corridors, provide Safe, Economical, Environmental and Equitable transportation, ***and healthy people!***

Our nation is far behind in the quest for Freedom of Mobility. Japan's Shinkansen rail system opened in 1964. Today it carries 370 million passengers annually at speeds up to 200 mph. There has not been one traffic-related fatality or injury in over 60 years of service.

The budget crisis will be resolved, and we will have a stronger economy and healthier citizenry, when we provide a balanced, sensible transportation system/environment for both people and freight.

Thank you!

*FOOTNOTE: One gallon of gasoline moves 1 ton of freight **480 miles by rail, 134 miles by truck**. One double stack train traveling on ***privately funded/maintained*** railways can replace **280** heavy trucks congesting and degrading/pounding **public pavement**. Short-haul trucks are needed for local distribution, creating local, family-wage, “family values,” jobs. Most long-haul freight should be by safe, economical, environmental rail.*

¹ Will Rogers said, “We are the first nation in the history of the world to go to the poorhouse in an automobile.” He had no idea how true his words were.