

Dear Senator Wagner and Representative Fahey and members of the committee:

When I testified in LaGrande earlier this year, I heard significant support for transit. There are no buses or rail from there to Portland or other locations for specialty medical care. When I visited Medford, I was able to take a bus from there to Portland and to use a bus service to Ashland. This helps the over thirty percent of Oregonians get places since they cannot drive.

The payroll tax for transit and the privilege tax are the only funding sources for Transit. I was dismayed to hear about a negotiation to reduce the increase in the transit tax to last only two years. Improving transit reduces the number of individual car trips and saves money over time.

In addition, the increase of 0.1% to the payroll tax is inadequate and will not increase services due to the loss of federal funding within a year or two. I am hopeful that you will seek methods of introducing a climate/transit bill in the future that will increase transit and safety funding.

The overall bill is very important to maintain current levels of maintenance and safety. There are a number of amendments from legislators from more rural areas that are seeking to reduce or strip funding for transit, Safe Routes to School, and infrastructure for rolling or walking. These legislators are not listening to their constituents and claim they must support no new taxes. The gas tax should always have been indexed to inflation and the tax on Electric vehicles is only requiring them to pay their fair share!

Please pass the bill with the transit funding intact and permanent.

Catherine Thomasson, MD