



SUNSET EMPIRE TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT
900 Marine Drive Astoria, Oregon 97103

RE: Testimony in Support of HB 4008 – Transit Funding Task Force

Dear Members of the House Committee on Transportation,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 4008 and sustained investment in rural public transportation. Rural coastal transit systems like the Sunset Empire Transportation District are at a critical point. Our agency has already reduced service by **30%**. Loss of STIF funding would force an additional **25–30% reduction**, leaving us able to operate **only one major intercity route** and limited ADA and curb to curb service and eliminating much of our local service (less frequency and later start/end of routes.) For much of the Northwest Coast, this would reduce access to public transportation significantly.

These reductions are driven not by inefficiency, but by unavoidable cost pressures. **Eighty percent of our fleet is past its end of useful life**, vehicle replacement costs are increasingly unattainable, and **deferred maintenance now exceeds 50% of our total annual budget**. Rising costs for facilities, shelters, and passenger amenities further strain limited resources. These challenges cannot be solved through efficiencies alone.

Despite these constraints, our system continues to deliver significant public value. We operate at **70% capacity** and serve **over 100,000 passengers annually**. Our service connects coastal residents to **critical healthcare**, including dialysis, mental health services, rehabilitation, and recovery. We provide **seniors and veterans** access to medical care, food, and family support, and we connect **youth and working families** to education, jobs, and essential services. For many of our passengers especially our elderly and disabled residents, we remain one of the **only affordable transportation options** available.

STIF funding is not supplemental for rural transit—it is **foundational**. Without it, vulnerable populations face isolation, healthcare access declines, and rural employers lose access to a reliable workforce. With stable, long-term funding, rural transit providers can preserve essential services, stabilize operations, and begin restoring mobility that supports public health and economic participation.

HB 4008 represents an important step toward identifying sustainable, long-term funding solutions. I respectfully urge your support for this effort and for policies that recognize the essential role rural public transportation plays in Oregon’s communities. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
David Carr, Executive Director
Sunset Empire Transportation District