

To: Chair McLain, and Members of the House Committee on Transportation

From: Matt Smith

Date: February 5, 2026

Re: Testimony in Opposition to House Bill 4085

Chair McLain and members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Matt Smith and I am a resident of Portland, Oregon. I am submitting this testimony today in opposition to House Bill 4085. While the evolution of autonomous vehicle (AV) technology offers significant potential for the future of Oregon's transportation network, the bill as currently drafted contains structural and regulatory gaps that require further refinement before it proceeds.

My opposition centers on three primary concerns regarding administrative oversight and local governance:

1. Broad Delegation of Safety Standards (Section 6) Section 6 of the bill grants the Department of Transportation (ODOT) the authority to issue exemptions for "any state equipment requirement" under ORS chapters 815 or 816. While technical flexibility is necessary for testing new technology, this provision allows an executive agency to bypass statutory safety requirements for essential components like braking systems and lighting. I urge the Committee to amend this section to include specific "intelligible principles" and safety benchmarks that ODOT must meet before waiving these fundamental standards.
2. Regulatory Parity and State Preemption (Sections 10 and 11) HB 4085 proposes to exempt autonomous vehicle networks from ORS Chapter 825. While I recognize that Chapter 825 primarily governs heavy motor carriers, the combination of this exemption and the broad preemption of local authority in Section 13 risks creating a "regulatory vacuum." It is vital that the legislature ensures all transportation providers—whether human-driven or autonomous—operate under a cohesive framework that provides equivalent public safety protections and equitable fee structures.
3. Preservation of Municipal Infrastructure Management (Section 13) Finally, Section 13 preempts local governments from regulating or licensing these networks. Cities like Portland have a fundamental interest in managing their own curb space and ensuring that businesses operating on their infrastructure contribute to its upkeep. I ask the Committee to consider amendments that explicitly protect the rights of municipalities to:

Collect per-ride fees equivalent to those paid by existing Transportation Network Companies (TNCs).

Enforce local "Rules of the Road" necessary for high-density urban environments.

Access anonymized data required to manage traffic flow and infrastructure wear.

House Bill 4085 should be amended to ensure that ODOT's authority is clearly defined and that the move toward state-wide uniformity does not undermine the fiscal health of our local communities. I urge the Committee to refine these sections to ensure a safe and level playing field for all.

Thank you for your time and for your consideration of these concerns.

Sincerely,

Matt Smith