



133 SW 2nd Ave, Suite 201 • Portland, OR 97204 • (503) 497-1000 • www.friends.org

Southern Oregon Office • PO Box 2442 • Grants Pass, OR 97528 • (541) 474-1155

Willamette Valley • 494 Willamette St, Suite 213 • Eugene, OR 97401 • (503) 497-1000 x8

April 9, 2019

Joint Committee on Transportation
State Capitol
900 Court St., NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: SB 413

Dear Co-Chairs Sen. Beyer and Rep. McKeown and Committee members:

1000 Friends of Oregon is a nonprofit, membership organization that has worked with Oregonians for more than 40 years to support livable urban and rural communities; protect family farms, forests and natural areas; and provide transportation and housing choice. We oppose SB 413.

SB 413 authorizes cities and counties to form a special taxing and revenue district(s) to undertake everything involved with financing, designing, building, and operating a limited access tollway(s). The bill authorizes the tollway district to use eminent domain to acquire land and to establish, collect, and enforce tolls.

While SB 413 has statewide application, it also allows any tollway to go through rural reserves, thus undermining the Metro area's agreement on rural and urban reserves and adversely impacting fertile Tualatin Valley and French Prairie farmland. Rural reserves have been agreed to by Washington, Clackamas, and Multnomah counties, Metro, and the state of Oregon; SB 413 would unravel that.

Although no route(s) is described in the bill, one route that has been discussed is a tollway extending from at least the Columbia River, across the Tualatin Valley west of the current Metro UGB, impacting Yamhill County and French Prairie, and joining I-5 somewhere in Marion County.

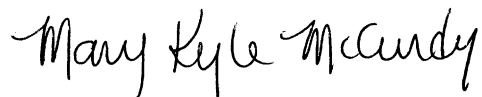
SB 413 will not solve any transportation problem, although freight mobility is sometimes used to justify this and similar proposals. However, freight volumes in Oregon are actually dropping, at the same time Oregon's economy continues to grow, and the value of freight moved is increasing. The most cost-effective ways to improve freight mobility is to provide automobile drivers options that take their cars off the roads, and to invest in rail transport.

However, SB 413 will adversely impact Oregon's #2 industry – agriculture – by paving over some of the state's most productive farmland and causing a ripple effect on the farming regions it crosses. Oregon's agriculture industry produces \$50 billion in sales annually; much of that is traded-sector, bringing new dollars into Oregon. Marion County is #1, and Clackamas and Washington counties are in the top 6, in the state's agriculture production.

SB 413 creates another transportation planning structure, outside Oregon's established and integrated transportation planning system, which could commit an enormous amount of Oregon's already limited transportation funding capacity. Oregon has smarter approaches, through its existing transportation planning and funding program, which are paying off. Oregon's state GDP is increasing while our driving has decreased. Forty-five percent of rush hour commuters going to downtown Portland take transit and 30% of Banfield and Sunset evening commuters use transit. Travel by bicycling and walking is increasing.

Oregon should be making more of these types of investments, and the Legislature passed the Transportation Act of 2017 to do just that - funding investments in increased transit, interconnected bicycle and pedestrian ways, and smaller improvements to existing roads. Oregon should stay on that path towards the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Kyle McCurdy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mary Kyle McCurdy
Policy Director and Staff Attorney