

TO: The Joint Committee on Transportation

FROM: Jane Stackhouse

Date: March 4, 2021

RE: SB 395 Increases required expenditure on footpaths and bicycle trails from one percent to five percent of amounts received from State Highway Fund.

Co-Chairs Beyer and McLain, Co-Vice Chairs Boquist and Noble, and members of the Joint Committee on Transportation thank you for this opportunity to comment on this important bill to help fund pedestrian and bicycle trails. I urge your support for passage of this bill.

I attended the Oregon Transportation Commission meetings as they discussed the 2021-2023 STIP spending. I watched as they agonized over how to spend their limited budget. Their new Climate Office had provided clear analysis of the air quality and social justice benefits of putting more of their budget toward pedestrian, bicycle and mass transit. They have, as you are well aware, a huge number of responsibilities and limited budget. It was clear that they wanted to do their best to allocate STIP funds to projects that will help reduce emissions, improved air quality and provide safe ways to children and all of us to travel by foot or bicycle.

They heard from their consultants and department staff that moving their budget to 'non-highway' projects would not only accomplish these benefits but create more jobs that just building highways, expend less pollution while doing so, and greatly enhance their safety goals.

Their only hesitancy seemed to be what they see as legislative mandates to build and repair roads. Passing SB 395 will help indicate to ODOT and the OTC the legislature's intent to move to modern transportation where we get out of our cars and build community by biking and walking to our jobs, schools and stores.

I know my testimony is not as compelling as the mother whose toddler was killed by a careless driver despite her husband's best efforts to protect him. Additional pedestrian and bicycle paths will benefit all Oregonians.