

March 15, 2021

House Committee on Judiciary House Subcommittee on Civil Law
900 Court St. NE - Remote 174
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: House Bill 2482

Chair Power, Vice-Chair Wallan and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony today on House Bill 2482.

TriMet is Oregon's largest public transit service provider, providing bus, light rail, commuter rail, street car and paratransit service to a 533 square mile area in Multnomah, Washington and Clackamas Counties. In a more typical year TriMet provides nearly 300,000 rides a day, or 100 million rides a year.

TriMet's top priority is keeping our riders, staff and community safe. While uniformed police officers have a limited role in fare enforcement, they play a critical role in ensuring the safety of the system.

TriMet opposes House Bill 2482 because it would prohibit law enforcement from conducting or participating in fare enforcement activities.

HB 2482 does not simply prohibit police officers from asking for proof of payment - it also prohibits police from "participating in activities" related to fare enforcement. This could mean that officers cannot be present while fare enforcement activities are underway, meaning TriMet staff and customers would be at greater risk of physical harm.

TriMet requires the flexibility for police officers to assist in fare enforcement efforts and, as needed, provide safety for our employees and riders during fare checks.

Over the past 3 years TriMet has worked with the Legislature to decriminalized fare enforcement, partnered with Districts Attorney to eliminate the application of Interfering with Public Transit (IPT) in cases of simple fare evasion, implemented a low income fare program, which now has more than 30,000 participants, and linked it to the administrative fare violation process so that first time fare violators can reduce their fine to zero if they qualify for the low income fare and agree to sign up for and load a low income HOP card with at least \$10.

These changes are intended to reduce the severity of fare violation penalties and reduce the chances that an individual will become entangled in the criminal justice system, while still maintaining an effective fare enforcement tool.

In July, calls for racial justice in policing led to candid conversations about race, safety, equity and the need for lasting change. TriMet has taken this opportunity to work with community partners and stakeholders to rethink our approach to safety on our system so everyone feels welcome. TriMet made the first step, redirecting \$1.8 million in police contracts and additional funding to explore new community-based services to expand our safety approach.

With all of these changes, TriMet would appreciate time to implement the proposals and determine, in conjunction with our community partners, what is working and what remains a problem. Providing safety and security is complicated and requires continuous adjustment and flexible tools to meet the needs of our diverse community.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to testify. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions or would like more information.

Sincerely,

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