

To: Co-Chairs Beyer and McLain, Co-Vice Chairs Boquist and Noble and members of the Joint Committee on Transportation

From: Jane Stackhouse, Portland Commuter

Date: March 23, 2021

RE: SB 332 Minimum Requirements for certain mass transit districts

I could support SB332 with a change to remove Section 3(2). Employers and businesses should help fund transit with payroll or other taxes. I do not understand why we would pass legislation that applies to large metropolitan areas that prevents tax on businesses just because they are located more than one mile from transit service. The one exception I do think is reasonable is self-employed individuals who do not service customers at their place of business.

My personal experience provides an excellent example. I began working for Nike at their headquarters while living in Northeast Portland. Nike provided annual Tri Met passes to all employees for \$20. They gave employees this huge discount because it offset their tax liability. These passes, while not stopping most single vehicle commutes, certainly encouraged people who would never take transit to give it a try. First to a Blazer game when congestion and parking issues make taking the MAX a preferred way to travel. Later, as I became more aware of the need to reduce my personal carbon footprint, that pass encouraged me to commute by MAX every day. A pleasant one-to-three-mile bike ride from my door to a MAX station, a train ride that allowed for time to read, prepare for a meeting, or simply enjoy the view, followed by a one-to-two-mile bike ride to my office became a daily routine. We need to encourage everyone to reduce use of personal vehicles both to decrease our carbon emissions and to ease congestion.

The issue of fairness must also be considered. Nike HQ is 1.4 miles from the nearest MAX stop although there is a bus line that is closer. I assume they would still be taxed if SB 332 is enacted although other businesses, just slightly farther from a bus line, would not be. Will this encourage businesses to locate just a bit further away from transit lines? We need to encourage more transit use not less. Businesses that are more than one mile from an established line should be encouraged to help their employees and customers use transit. The tax could be off set by the costs for transit passes and even options for the 'last mile' but the last two or three or five miles.

I am aware from my own years of travel from inner Northeast Portland to Nike Headquarters in Beaverton that mass transit is not always the fastest or most convenient way to travel. As I have talked with people who have less convenient commutes than mine, I found that no matter the length of time required, mass transit is simply not available. One hardy commuter recounted her story of a ten block walk to catch a bus at 5:30 to arrive to work by 7:00 for her full-time job. She observed she was fortunate that her part time hotel cleaning job would allow her to spend the night because no buses ran by the time her shift ended.

The proposed mandatory service hours of 7 AM to 11 PM might be adequate for most but not for workers like this hardy commuter who had been forced by rising rents to move to a new apartment 'in the numbers' and has to endure this horrendous travel schedule to keep her jobs.