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February 1, 2023

Co-Chairs Sen. Gorsek and Rep. McLain and Members  
Joint Committee on Transportation  
State Capitol  
Salem, OR

Re: HB 2781

Dear Co-Chairs and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 2781. 1000 Friends of Oregon is a nonprofit, membership organization that works with Oregonians to support livable urban and rural communities; protect family farms, forests and natural areas; and provide transportation and housing choice. 1000 Friends of Oregon has long been involved in land use and transportation issues.

1000 Friends opposes HB 2781. The bill authorizes the creation of an unnecessary, additional layer of transportation government, and if a transportation district comes into existence, it would be focused on building additional bridges and roads at a time when Oregon should be focused on repairing existing infrastructure and investing in climate-friendly transportation options.

HB 2781 authorizes creation of another layer of transportation government - a bridge district - encompassing Marion, Benton, Polk, and Yamhill counties. This new district, if voted upon, would have significant powers to

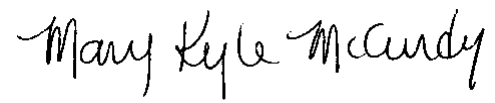
"assess, levy and collect taxes on all taxable property within the boundaries of the district in order to pay: (a) The costs of planning, financing, constructing, operating and maintaining bridges over the Willamette River in the capital city region."

These counties, and the cities in them, already do extensive, coordinated transportation planning pursuant to a long-existing state and federal law structure. There is no need for the state to authorize creation of a new transportation planning entity. In a time when Oregon must be focused on addressing our climate crisis, including reducing driving – and especially in the major urban areas of the state such as Salem area - we should invest in increasing access to transit, safe walking and biking routes, and carpools.

This bill has been proposed before, and in that elapsed time we have seen a marked increase in remote working that has decreased traffic, which reinforces the wisdom of investing in transportation options to meet the needs of the all the region's residents.

Thank you for consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

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

Mary Kyle McCurdy  
Deputy Director