

February 16, 2023

Senator Janeen Sollman
Senate Committee on Energy and Environment
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Support SB 124 & SB 125

Chair Sollman and Members of the Committee:

TriMet is Oregon's largest regional transit provider, serving more than 1.6 million people across our 533-square mile service district in the tri-county Portland metro area. We write today to express our support for SB 124 and SB 125, both of which would help grow Oregon's nascent renewable hydrogen industry.

Transportation is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in the state of Oregon, and transit plays a leading role in reducing those emissions by replacing millions of car trips every year. However, with about 700 diesel buses in our fleet, TriMet is also the largest consumer of diesel fuel in Oregon. Our 2021 switch to renewable diesel, combined with our move to renewable energy for our electric MAX light rail system and all TriMet-owned facilities, has reduced our GHG emissions by nearly 70% in less than a year's time. In spite of this progress, we recognize that transitioning away from diesel buses entirely is critical to reducing harmful diesel emissions and addressing the climate crisis locally. That's why TriMet is planning to operate a 100% zero-emission bus fleet by 2040.

TriMet is already moving away from the purchase of new standard diesel buses by purchasing battery electric buses as our current buses retire and we expand service. Our current order of 24 long-range battery electric buses will be arriving in late 2023, and will expand TriMet's current battery electric bus fleet to 34 vehicles by mid-2024. However, we are still determining what mix of technology is right for our system and our region.

Hydrogen fuel cell buses would address some of the challenges that battery electric buses currently face with range and on-route charging, but Oregon's lack of renewable hydrogen fueling infrastructure is a major obstacle to deploying a hydrogen bus fleet. The renewable hydrogen demonstration projects that would be enabled by Senate Bill 124 and 125 are an important step in scaling the deployment of hydrogen technology and reducing the cost of renewable hydrogen fuel, as we have seen with solar and wind energy and electric cars.

Transitioning to zero-emission buses is critical to reaching our 2040 goal, but it is also prohibitively expensive. All told, TriMet estimates that our transition to a 100% zero-emission bus fleet will cost the agency more than \$2 billion over the next 20 years—about \$1 billion in excess of what replacing our existing bus fleet with new diesel vehicles would cost, and more than our expected revenues can support. The grant programs in Senate Bill 124 and 125 would help Oregon seize a crucial opportunity to secure significant federal funding for investments in renewable hydrogen. As a state, we need to be using every available tool to help Oregon's medium- and heavy-duty fleets with the costly transition zero-emission vehicles.

For these reasons, TriMet urges you support SB 124 and SB 125. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Miles Pengilly', is positioned below the word 'Sincerely,'.

Miles Pengilly
State Government Affairs Manager
TriMet