

Testimony on SB 14
Before the Joint Transportation Committee
February 28, 2023

Co-Chairs Sen Gorsek, Rep McClain, members of the Joint Transportation Committee:

In the late 1970's and early 80's I was the a Regional Manager for the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Section of the Oregon State Health Division - assessing and improving the health care system, primarily EMS – for all Oregonians east of the Cascade Mountains – from Klamath Falls to Imnaha, from Cascade Locks to Burns.

Living in Pendleton, I traveled throughout Eastern Oregon throughout the year, and am intimately familiar with travel concerns, *and* the high toll our transportation system takes, on Oregonians *and tourists* – especially in the I-84 corridor.

It is not unusual for much of the I-84 corridor to be shut down, especially during winter months. From 1977 until 1997 the *Amtrak Pioneer* provided Safe, Economical, Environmental and Equitable transportation along the I-84 corridor. I often relied on the *Pioneer* for both business and personal travel. (*SEEE* the future!)

As an active member, Director and past President of **AORTA**, the Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates, we polled passengers on the *Pioneer*. We were surprised by how many Eastern Oregon residents relied on *the Pioneer* to reach essential medical services in the Portland area – there was one traveler who depended (in part) on the train to access medical services on the Oregon Coast.

All too often, those in charge of deciding transportation policy fail to recognize that 30 - 40% of our population cannot drive, or do not have access to an automobile. If you drive, you know that many who have access to an automobile probably should not.

Please vote for SB 14

It is my hope that amendments will be offered to this bill which require ODOT to:

- Consult with communities along the route – Cascade Locks, Hood River, The Dalles, Hermiston, Pendleton, LaGrande, Baker City and Ontario.
- Consult with the (only) statewide rail passenger association which was instrumental in bringing the *Pioneer* to Oregon in 1977.
- Consult with Union Pacific Railroad, which owns (most of) the right-of-way.
- Include in the study service (and ridership) to and beyond Boise – a factor (750+ miles) that causes this train to be classified as part of the national system, and reduce the financial burden for Oregon.

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