

Submitter: Richard Sheperd
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation
Measure: SB14

Dear Co-Chairs McClain and Gorsek, Co-Chairs Boshart-Davis and Boquist, and Members of the Joint Transportation Committee,

I am following up my in-person testimony to ask that you support to SB 14, with the proposed amendment by Co-Chair Gorsek to expand the bill to include studying passenger rail across the entire state.

With Oregon cities now home to some of the most expensive housing in the US (Portland-Vancouver stands at #9 among major Metros, just above the Washington DC-Arlington metro according to Realtor.com), former residents are being pushed to further and further out from major job centers, losing access to healthcare, and educational opportunities.

It is clear that to address the housing affordability crisis, we must build more housing in our major Metro areas. Otherwise, we will risk losing our natural areas and farmland.

However, if that housing is not connected to and from our major cities with frequent, high-capacity transportation, we will see our regions choked by congestion, as we see in cities like Los Angeles and Houston. We must offer a communities high-capacity and frequent rail to access the significant career and educational opportunities both to and from our major cities in Oregon.

With expanded rail transportation, we will enable greater access for Oregonians to jobs, healthcare, and education for those who cannot afford or are unable to drive. It will also have a significant impact on our state's Greenhouse Gas Emissions, as 40% of our state's emissions come from transportation.

Giving further study to how we can improve passenger rail transportation, and most importantly develop reliable sources of funding for operation, is a crucial step.

Please support SB 14, with the proposed amendment from Co-Chair Gorsek, to move Oregon passenger rail forward.

Sincerely,
Richard Sheperd