



February 5, 2024

Dear Co-Chair Gorsek, Co-Chair McLain, Vice-Chair Boquist, and Vice-Chair Boshart Davis:

This letter is to express Travel Salem's support for Senate Bill 1572, which proposes the extension of the Westside Express Service (WES) commuter rail line to Salem. This initiative not only aligns with the growing demand for sustainable transportation solutions but also presents significant opportunities for tourism to the Willamette Valley, economic development, and environmental improvement in our region.

The Act mandates the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) to conduct a comprehensive study on extending the WES commuter rail line to Salem. The establishment of an advisory committee to assist ODOT in this study ensures a collaborative and informed decision-making process. This cooperative effort is crucial in exploring the feasibility and potential benefits of such an extension.

Furthermore, the Act stipulates that ODOT must submit a report no later than December 1, 2024. This timeline reflects a sense of urgency and ensures that the study progresses in a timely manner.

An extension of the WES commuter rail line to Salem, as proposed by SB 1572, will have a positive impact on our community. Beyond alleviating traffic congestion on I-5, this initiative will contribute to our state's commitment to reducing carbon emissions, fostering a healthier environment, and advancing sustainable transportation alternatives.

The potential for this commuter rail extension to serve as a tourism development opportunity is particularly exciting. Residents from both the Portland and Salem Metro Areas could access Oregon Wine Country for outdoor recreation, heritage experiences, and culinary and Agritourism opportunities. This not only enhances connectivity but also supports local businesses and promotes our region as a vibrant tourism destination.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I look forward to witnessing the positive outcomes that SB 1572 can bring to our state.

Sincerely,

Angie Villery
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