



American Planning Association  
**Oregon Chapter**

*Creating Great Communities for All*

February 5, 2025

Joint Transportation

**Re: HB 3231 and 3233**

Position: Support

I am writing in support of HB **3231 and 3233**, on behalf of the Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association.

The Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association (OAPA) is a nonprofit professional membership organization of over 800 planners and those who work with planning in formulating and implementing development and conservation policies at the state and local level. OAPA works to create sustainable and vibrant Oregon communities through professional development, advocacy for sound planning, providing resources to meet the challenges of growth and change, and embracing and promoting diversity, inclusion and equity.

HB 3231 would update the passenger rail plan to include strategies for increased passenger capacity and for upgrading railroad track and its infrastructure. HB 3233 directs DOT to work with its Washington and British Columbia cohorts to develop a plan for passenger rail and freight rail service within the Cascades Rail Corridor.

OAPA support for HB 3231 and HB 3233 stems from its policy priorities to "**Promote Safe and Equitable** Transportation Systems" and to "Confront climate change and its impacts."

OAPA recognizes the importance of strategically investing in all transit options, including rapid bus transit, self-propelled light rail, streetcars, commuter trains, and heavy rail systems. A connected rail system with the Cascade rail corridor would promote improved connectivity within Oregon's suburban, rural, and exurban areas and the greater Northwest region.

OAPA also recognizes the importance of modernizing and keeping Oregon's existing rail transportation infrastructure in good repair and coming up with creative solutions that address the challenges that aging transportation infrastructure poses to Oregon's transportation system.


OAPA also recognizes that bills will contribute to climate change action: "The rail network, for both passengers and freight, produces lower GHG emissions than roadway and air transportation, which means that shifting trips from road and air to rail in markets where it makes sense can reduce overall transportation emissions," (Federal Railroad Administration - [railroads.dot.gov](http://railroads.dot.gov)).

In supporting HB 3233, OAPA requests that the plan development process for passenger and freight rail services within the Cascades Rail Corridor prioritize the safety of **all** rail and freight users while considering vulnerable system users. OAPA also requests that the plan development emphasize transparent, community-led engagement and equitable participation methods, focusing on involving underserved populations most affected by transportation decisions. Furthermore, OAPA urges that the plan policies align with Oregon's statewide planning goals to benefit urban, rural, and tribal communities that lack adequate rail and freight infrastructure.

Finally, OAPA asks that HB 3231 and 3233 consider FRA's Office of Climate and Sustainability Programs three primary focus areas "covering emissions reductions, resiliency, and sustainability, with individual initiatives supporting the goals of each focus area" to "assist the rail industry in reducing pollution, building resilient infrastructure, and creating a sustainable rail network."

Thank you for your consideration of OAPA testimony on HB 3231 and 3233. Investing in public multi-modal transit provides economic resilience, climate resilience, and community resilience.

Sincerely,



**Jonathan Harker**

Chair, Legislative and Policy Affairs Committee

Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association

[www.oregonapa.org](http://www.oregonapa.org)