

Submitter: Jordan Lewis
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3362

Hello Chairs Gorsek and McLain and the rest of the Joint Transportation Committee,

I am testifying today in support of HB 3362, which would fund transit and wildlife crossings with an excise tax on tire sales. I would actually prefer that the 75-25 split be further in favor of transit, because every transit rider is another car not on the road at all, even where wildlife crossings aren't built. Nonetheless, this is a great bill and I want to see it become law.

Unfortunately, the bills language uses the word "rail" although it is not limited to just rail. At the transportation road show this summer, every city expressed support for new transit funding by a majority, even the rural ones. This is because rural and small-town Oregonians who literally cannot drive rely on public buses to get to hospitals and other services. It is regrettable that culture war politics have negatively polarized so many Oregonians against the concept of public transit, which predates the automobile in Oregon; Salem, Albany, Astoria, Eugene and Corvallis all had historic streetcar systems 100 years ago.

To those rural Oregonians concerned about increased taxes, I hear you; but to be clear, mass transit is not taking your funding away. Billion Dollar Road megaprojects in the Portland area, like the i5 rose quarter and Abernathy bridge freeway project are taking much more than the 4 dollars on a hundred dollar tire you would pay here. Every additional transit rider is 1 less car you have to share the road with! If you still drive, you will enjoy less congestion. And let's not forget that tires are literally toxic waste which chemically kills salmon and catches on fire. Do the right thing, pass HB 3362. Thank you!