

Submitter: Ruth Neuhauser
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3453

Dear Co-Chair McLain, Co-Chair Gorsek, Vice-Chair Boshart-Davis, Vice-Chair Starr, and members of the Joint Committee on Transportation,

I am a native Oregonian writing to support HB 3453.

I grew up in Yamhill, OR and if the family car was in use, I was stuck in the town of 1,000 people unless I managed to get the one bus a day that ran to McMinnville. HB 3453 would increase access to opportunities for the approximately 30 percent of Oregonians who can't or don't drive, a group that includes a high portion of seniors, young people, and people with disabilities. It would also help commuter congestion in the I-5 corridor by more efficiently moving people than in single-occupancy vehicles, which is also safer for all - avoiding automobile collision possibility with every commuter removed from individual car to rail system. I personally have considered taking jobs in Salem and ruled them out from commute considerations - but rail would make the state capital so much more accessible.

We need to thoughtfully plan station development and connections along the corridor for the maximum benefit to the communities WES will serve. This bill is a special opportunity to grow our commitment to transit-oriented development, too, helping us build healthy, livable communities that feel connected and comfortable. I see this bill as being part of a larger needed strategy around improving passenger rail and intercity transit service across the state. People in rural areas need to be able to connect to healthcare and other life-sustaining services in major metropolitan areas. Likewise, urban residents should be able to access recreation, attend events, and visit friends and family across the state without needing a car. Increasing WES service to Salem and Eugene will open the door for vital investments in new housing, retail, education, recreation, and job opportunities around those new stations.

This bill is a step toward a more connected, accessible, and affordable Oregon, where more people can move freely across large portions of our state without needing a car or contributing to harmful carbon emissions.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 3453. I urge you to vote in support of this bill.