

Submitter: Fischer Jemison
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3453

Dear Co-chairs Gorsek and McLain and members of the Joint Committee on Transportation. My name is Fischer Jemison and I live in Portland, Oregon. I support House Bill 3453.

Expansion of passenger rail is one of the most important ways Oregon can promote alternatives to driving and relieve traffic on our freeways and the WES service is well positioned to do this by taking advantage of rail corridors that are either under-utilized or already owned by the state of Oregon.

I would suggest the committee also consider how the operations of the WES Authority can be aligned with international best practices. The WES Authority should evaluate work from organizations like the Transit Costs Project that have identified specific recommendations that American transit agencies can adopt to streamline project timelines and control costs. Examples of those recommendations include following a "Design-Bid-Build" procurement process and retaining engineering staff in-house who can evaluate the work of contractors working on construction projects. For more information, see the following URL: <https://transitcosts.com/transit-costs-study-final-report>.

The WES Authority should also follow international best practices on service levels and transit oriented development. The existing WES service runs infrequently and is focused on rush hour commuters, while high ridership services internationally run more trains at all times of day to attract more types of riders. International transit organizations also develop housing on land they own near stations both to capture the increase in land value from transit expansion and to ensure transit lines have residents living nearby who can take advantage of the new service. The WES Authority ideally should have both a mandate to maximize density near stations and permitting authority allowing it to develop dense housing without waiting on municipalities to update their zoning codes to reflect new services created by the Authority.