

Submitter: Sarah Haynes
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 an Oregonian who strongly supports HB 3453. As a citizen in the Willamette Valley near Eugene, I can assure you that I will personally make use of this service once it's extended to my locale.

This bill will positively affect anyone traveling between the Portland metro area and Salem (and eventually, Eugene). By increasing regional transportation options and accessibility, congestion and greenhouse-gas emissions from intercity travel in the Willamette Valley will be reduced.

HB 3453 would increase access to opportunities for the approximately 30 percent of Oregonians who can't or don't drive. This population 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, as opposed to single-occupancy vehicles. Notably, Oregon's transportation sector is the biggest contributor to the state's greenhouse-gas emissions.

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. 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.

I see this bill as being part of an overarching strategy to improve passenger rail and intercity transit service across the state. There is a significant need for improved transportation options between communities. 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.

This bill is a step toward a more connected, accessible, and affordable Oregon, where more people can move freely across larger 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.