

Submitter: Elizabeth Vassilaros  
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 supports HB 3453, which will positively enhance commuting between the Portland and Salem (and wishfully, Eugene). This bill will increase needed regional transportation and provide equal accessibility to people who can't afford driving, by reducing: 1) physical and mental stress, especially during rush-hour congestion, 2) fuel-costs and 3) greenhouse-gas emissions of single-occupancy vehicles during intercity travel in the Willamette Valley.

The overdue need of regional public transportation options to connect main vibrant cities such as Portland, Salem and Eugene along the corridor will benefit to the communities WES will serve. This bill is a special opportunity to grow our commitment to alternative transit-oriented development. We could improve communities and families along with local and national tourism feeling safe and accessible to cities beyond the international Portland airport. 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 a crucial piece of a larger needed strategy around improving passenger rail and intercity transit service across the state. I learned the hard way when family came to visit Oregon, and a private shuttle option could cost individuals like me an average of \$360 per individual transported, each way from Portland to Eugene as an example. without enjoying the scenery of beautiful Oregon. think of many more friends and family could benefit from visiting perhaps students and colleagues from OSU or UO as examples. I also have been present when 3 major accidents on I-5 costed me and everyone on the road up to 2 extra hours to one way destination each time due to an existing lack of public transportation alternatives besides I-5. I live in Eugene and work in Salem and I personally know of colleagues and friends that carpool from Eugene to Salem and vice versa each way every single day hoping for a change in public transportation options beyond the unreliable times currently available, so they can make it in time back to their jobs and families. 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 cultural events, and visit friends and family across the state without needing a car and similarly for those who would like to visit us from outside our state borders. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 3453. I

urge you to vote in support of this bill.