

Submitter: Paul Diller  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3453

Dear Co-chairs Gorsek & McClain and co-vice-chairs,

I strongly support the concept behind this bill of Oregon extending commuter rail from the Portland metro area to Salem and beyond. I have commuted from the Portland area to Salem for almost 20 years. It is a terrible commute by car. The roads are often traffic-clogged and there are many trucks on the road that make for dangerous conditions during intense rain. I-5 is rarely sufficiently maintained and stretches of it frequently feature ruts in the road due to wear and the studded snow tires that Oregon allows. It is not uncommon for major accidents, including jackknifed semi's, to shut down an entire direction of the highway somewhere between Eugene and Portland. We clearly need alternatives to the current system. Even the well-run shared Cherriots/SMART 1X bus from Wilsonville to Salem, which I have taken on a regular basis for many years now, is not immune to problems on I-5. Because the 1X relies on buses doing a loop of northbound-southbound or vice versa, an accident in one direction of the highway inevitably affects one's commute in the other.

Although Amtrak is an alternative to SMART for those coming from Portland, it is of limited frequency and is not set up as a commuter rail system. The tickets are more expensive, the ticket-buying process is more laborious and rigid, bikes are \$5 each way (and sometimes now allowed), and there is a discrepancy between the Amtrak Thruway bus and train routes in terms of the stations they serve. I commuted from Wilsonville to Eugene partly by Amtrak for four months and invite you to read more about my impressions of that system on Substack here:  
[https://substack.com/home/post/p-152600678?utm\\_campaign=post&utm\\_medium=web](https://substack.com/home/post/p-152600678?utm_campaign=post&utm_medium=web).

A better system of public transit between the Portland area and Salem will help with housing costs, tourism, make the labor market more mobile, and just generally increase quality of life in the Portland-Salem area.

I indicate my stance as neutral rather than in favor because it is not obvious to me why we need to 1) spin WES off from TriMet in order to extend it to Salem and 2) why we need to address service from Salem to Eugene at this point in time. (There may be good answers to both of these but I am just not aware of them at the moment.) Just extending WES from Wilsonville to Salem would be a huge win. I am in complete support of the sentiment behind this bill, however, and thank Representatives Mannix and Neron for co-sponsoring it.

Sincerely,  
Paul A. Diller  
Wilsonville, Or.