

Date: March 11, 2025

To: Joint Committee on Transportation

Subject: Support HB 3453

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

My name is Brenda Garcia Mejía, and I live in Salem, Oregon, and I am writing to you in **support of HB 3453**, which will aid and ease individuals traveling between the Portland metro area and Salem (and eventually and hopefully, Eugene). Through the implementation of this bill, there will be efforts to expand transportation choices, improve accessibility, and reduce existing congestion, which, over time, can decrease. Additionally, it will help lower greenhouse gas emissions caused by travel.

Currently, around 30 % of Oregonians either do not drive or choose not to drive, and therefore, I assume many rely on public transportation. HB 3453 will provide greeted access for those who need it, including seniors, young people, and individuals with disabilities. As a college student, I can see how my peers would benefit from this bill, particularly when it comes to traveling home during the holidays. Additionally, many students remain on campus during the academic year due to a lack of transportation options. Commuting via the I-5 corridor is not ideal, and offering a more efficient alternative to vehicles will help reduce traffic. The efforts to implement this bill will be worth it, as it will bring positive environmental changes. Oregon's current transportation sector is a major contributor to the state's greenhouse gas emissions, but HB 3453 can help address that issue.

The benefits of this bill go beyond environmental improvements. With careful planning and organizing, users of the WES system can have a better travel experience. Establishing transit connections across Oregon will encourage more people to use public transportation due to its improved quality and convenience.

However, convenience should not be the only focus of this bill. While Oregon has some transportation options, they are not accessible to everyone in the state, as they are limited to certain areas. It is important to remember the individuals who do not have access to reliable transportation, such as seniors, youth and individuals with disabilities. This lack of accessible transportation can create significant challenges when trying to access basic needs, food, and healthcare. **The absence of transportation options should not limit someone's ability to go out and meet their essential needs.**

HB 3453 is an important step towards a more connected, accessible, and sustainable Oregon, where more people can travel across the state without relying on a car or contributing to harmful carbon emissions.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my input on HB 3453.

Sincerely,

Brenda Garcia Mejía