

Submitter: Christina Kroker
TO: Joint Committee on Transportation
RE: Support of HB 3453
DATE: March 13, 2025

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

I am Christina Kroker, a 21 year old college student attending Willamette University studying Environmental Science and Studio Art. Like many who attend out-of-state higher education facilities full-time, I have limited access to personal transportation and a limited budget. Transportation options thus far have been both unaffordable and harmful to the environment. For some of my friends, who are a part of the around 30% of Oregonians who don't or can't drive, this is due to a disability. Without means of transportation, it is increasingly difficult to seek out job and internship opportunities. If I had access to convenient, clean, affordable transportation, I would be able to seek out job opportunities in Portland, a hot spot for the arts and sciences. Pollution is becoming an increasing threat to health. In Oregon, the transportation sector is the biggest contributor to greenhouse-gas emissions. I study in Oregon because I plan to stay in Oregon, so I need to ensure the health of myself and other future Oregonians is protected. Additionally, gas prices for single-occupancy vehicles are becoming increasingly expensive. This cost is on top of the other fees associated with rentals/purchasing the vehicle, mechanic fees, insurance, and parking (street parking, parking garages, university parking passes, etc.). To make things worse these vehicles hold a small amount of people, meaning frequent use by high volumes of people cause freeways to become congested and inefficient. Public transportation reduces congestion, improves efficiency, and is on average safer when compared to single-occupancy vehicles. This is because large vehicle operators must complete extra training and acquire additional certifications. Increasing this industry can also, therefore, create jobs. It's a win-win-win situation for the state, the individual, and for the environment. If we can commit to creating public transportation in the short term, we can go far.

For these reasons, I strongly urge you to support HB 3453, which will positively affect Oregonians traveling between Portland and Salem. The Willamette Valley is a key part of a larger strategy to expand passenger rail and intercity transit service across the state, meaning that by saying yes to HB 3453 we improve transportation for not only us, but the whole of Oregon. We do not want to get left behind on this amazing opportunity. We need this bill to increase affordable, sustainable, and accessible transportation options for not just Willamette Valley residents, but all Oregonians.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to comment on this bill,
Christina Kroker

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