

Submitter: Drew Millegan  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3453

Dear Co-chairs Gorsek and McLain and members of the Joint Committee on Transportation,

My name is Drew Millegan and I live in McMinnville, Oregon. I support House Bill 3453.

Living in McMinnville, we have a right-of-way owned by the same rail company (PNWR under Genesee & Wyoming) that currently operates WES for TriMet. I think an authority to oversee potential expansion and management of the line separate from TriMet is a fantastic idea - the limited nature of the line is precisely what has held the service back compared to its more expansive cousin - the MAX network. WES is also held back by other issues beyond networking issues, such as limited operational times, long headways, and extremely limited and specialized rolling stock. I am sure that many of you may be aware that the company which WES initially bought its rolling stock from went bankrupt in the calamity that was the Great Recession - with TriMet going as far as to directly pay the company's rent, phone, and power bills to keep the company functioning long enough to deliver its railcars.

A WES Authority would be a significant improvement over the current operational structure, and beyond this sends the message that Oregon is looking to the future for expansion of our limited commuter rail. It is a move toward a multimodal transportation network that decreases reliance on personal vehicles, thus addressing the urgent need for more sustainable and efficient travel options in the Portland Metro Region and beyond. This creates more travel options allows people to connect the rest of their trips with other forms of transit or by walking or biking.

Of course, I would also love it if the new WES Authority considered expansion of intercity commuter services beyond just Salem and Eugene as mentioned specifically in this bill. The cities and towns of the west valley are in such a neat line, and the right-of-way also connects to the Amtrak Cascades trunk line in both Albany and Eugene. Not only that, but the west valley is critical for connections on through to the Oregon Coast - a region which does, believe it or not, also have bus and transit systems that would be greatly improved by a trunk line of high-capacity transit travel in the Willamette Valley. The whole valley and all of Oregon would love to have this new authority as an excuse to upgrade and update our rail lines for not only passenger, but the freight which runs along the same tracks.

Just imagine never having to get stuck in traffic driving from your constituent regions

to the Capitol in Salem ever again - and from many more places in the Willamette Valley!

I strongly urge your YES vote for House Bill 3453!

Thank you,

Drew Millegan