

Submitter: Cyreena Boston Ashby

On Behalf Of: The 1803 Fund

Committee: Joint Committee on Transportation

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB 715

Testimony: Good afternoon, Madam Chair McClain and Senator Gorsek, Co-Chairs of the Joint Committee on Transportation. And good afternoon to Vice Chairs Starr and Boshart Davis – and to all members of the Committee – hello.

For the record my name is Cyreena Boston Ashby, and I reside in Portland and work in Portland.

I extend gratitude to Senator Frederick, Senator Pham and Representative Ruiz, co-sponsors of SB 715 of which I am here to testify today.

I represent the 1803 Fund.

1803 is an investment fund.

Not only are we investors we:

1. Have expertise in urban transportation infrastructure and finance
2. Maintain networks and relationships with global transportation experts
3. Conceived a time-tested vision for the future of Portland

Through community investment and financial investments in real assets, we commit to a deeply rooted community that enables Black People to achieve and sustain collective prosperity, starting with the Albina neighborhood in Portland.

The Albina neighborhood is of critical mention. The Albina neighborhood in Portland was defined by its status as the historic heart of the city's Black community, a place where Black residents could own homes and businesses, earn a living and foster a shared culture. This neighborhood is within the 97227–zip code and is a part of Senator Fredrick's district. We thank him for his representation.

97227 was also the zip code inside the original Interstate 5 construction that displaced thousands of Black families and residents in Albina.

Today, 1803 is vigilant to ensure that our beloved Albina is no longer subject to repeating this history. That means we actively monitor, and participate in any infrastructure projects in Albina, 97227, and greater Portland.

That includes infrastructure and transportation we know will be of positive impact. We believe that Cascadia High-speed Rail will be of vital impact to our community and, it is great for Oregon and this region.

Although the specific paths and land use planning are yet to be determined, what we know is that when Cascadia High-speed Rail runs from Washington state to Oregon, it will pass through Albina.

1803 is in support of SB 715. We are excited and focused on this act.

Cascadia high-speed rail is a core investment that will have local economic, social and environmental benefit for Oregonians. There are various benefits, including faster and more efficient travel, reduced carbon emissions and potential economic growth through increased accessibility. The plan for this line to come through Albina means this will overtly affect Black Portlanders, who should also benefit from this transformation.

While the committee considers parts of the transportation package that repairs built environment (yes, potholes are everywhere) we place this high on our list for dual importance.

We support the act that creates a high-speed rail task force. We ask on the record that the task force includes Albina, and Black residents and Black businesses in the study and research about high-speed rail in Oregon. Where appropriate, 1803 will communicate with the Cascadia High Speed Rail Task Force regarding our perspectives and needs for Albina.

1803 has the agility to convene and partner on this project, and we must be a part of the work. Our local investments and regional expertise positions us as an informed contributor.

When I-5 was constructed through Albina, the community did not have the networks, resources or power to be in discussion about the impact of that freeway to their community. Today, we do. And we look forward to being in the center of this discussion.

As the Committee considers the other testimonies of stakeholders in Washington and Canada, we at 1803 affirm their testimonies and have conferred with them regarding our endorsement of SB 715. We will commit to working with these stakeholders, as well as Portland Mayor Wilson and Metro Councilor Simpson and Chair Peterson.

Please support SB 715.

Thank you for your time.