

Submitter:

Peter Laciano

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Joint Committee On Transportation

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

SB1202

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

I am testifying in strong support of Senate Bill 1202, to create an Oregon Department of Rail and Transit. It is critical for Oregon to have a dedicated agency that is laser-focused and structured around improving state-wide transportation options. ODOT has shown little interest in transit -- it neglected critical grant funding for routes such as a revived Amtrak Pioneer service and failed to raise the alarm around failing private bus service. The fact that there is currently no way to get between Portland and Boise without a car is an indictment of ODOT's management.

I grew up in the northeast U.S. and know first-hand how transformative regional transit systems can be. I went to college in upstate New York, hundreds of miles away from my family in New Jersey. Despite not owning a car, I had multiple transit options available to me, including Amtrak and multiple bus services, that I could use to visit my family on breaks and gain access to important services, such as specialized healthcare, that were not available in my immediate environment. Creating an agency with the capability of creating such a network in Oregon, and a dedicate funding source to make it happen, would unlock economic opportunity and improved social outcomes in all corners of the state.

Once again, I urge you to support Senate Bill 1202.

Thank you.