

Submitter: Jordan Lewis  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1202

Hello Joint Transportation Committee, co-chairs Gorsek and McLain,

My girlfriend and I share a car. She needs it to get to work in Clark County, Washington, because that region has intentionally chosen to block transit and segregate itself from the Portland metro region. I cannot afford my own car, so as long as reliable transit options do not exist, I cannot travel where I want to go. I am testifying in support of SB 1202, which would create an Oregon department of rail and transit. This department would create useful public transportation routes, which I already use when available, but there are not enough. I took the POINT bus to Astoria with my girlfriend last December on a date. We have always wanted to visit cities like Bend, Pendleton and Corvallis, but our car is in poor repair and we don't want to chance it breaking down on the way. If it did break down, we would be stranded!

It is ridiculous that no public transportation exists along I-84 in northeast Oregon! We would use this service if it existed, and it did with the pioneer Amtrak route in the 90s! ODOT has neglected its responsibilities here and I believe the department of rail and transit could finally address these needs. ODOT will always neglect non-car modes as long as it is incentivized to spend its entire budget on road expansion and repair projects. Splitting the priorities into separate departments just makes sense.

Lastly, it is crucial that ODRT be satisfactorily funded in order to achieve its goals. Per the request of the Oregon transit administration this year, I echo the request that the statewide transportation improvement fund (STIF) be increased at LEAST to 0.5%, if not more. Additionally, I would support further fees on new vehicles and dealerships, as both the buyers and sellers of new vehicles are affluent and so it would be a progressive revenue stream. I support senator Gorsek's tire fee, as tires have immense environmental externalities and some revenue should go towards reducing our dependence on them. Lastly I propose a delivery and/or rideshare fee, as we have seen in states like Minnesota and Colorado. If app services like these are going to damage our roads and undercut our unions, they should at least fund services here instead of freeloading off the public dollar.

Thank you and I hope you will fully fund ODRT in addition to passing it.