

June 10, 2025

Joint Committee on Transportation Reinvestment
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Support for HB 2025 – STIF funding

Dear Co-Chairs McLain and Gorsek and Members of the Committee,

I'd like to first thank Co-Chairs McLain and Gorsek and Members of the Committee for allowing this opportunity to express my support for HB 2025.

I'm Doug Vernieu. I am a dispatcher and bus driver for the Tillamook County Transportation District. As has been stated on other occasions, we provide fixed bus route and a Dial-A- Ride service for both personal and non-emergency medical transport for the residents of Tillamook County.

I've thought many times how to convey my own thoughts and feelings in support of HB 2025. I'll do so by providing you with a little bit of my own story.

I moved to Tillamook County nearly 4 years ago and began working for the Tillamook County Transportation District within about 4 months or so of arriving. From being a full-time driver, and getting to know our community, I've come to see the absolute necessity that these services provide.

In this rural area there are very few transportation options in the way of Uber/Lyft/taxis, etc. Having access to transportation becomes a necessity and an affordable means of transportation for many people that are disabled, elderly, or otherwise unable to afford other means of transportation.

As an example of the necessity of these services: Depending upon where one resides in the County, the nearest grocery store could be 15 or 20 miles away. The nearest clinics, hospitals, post offices, optometrists, and other products and services can be several miles away. So, these transportation services provide a lifeline to County residents that rely upon the service for taking care of their shopping, medical, and social needs. Enhancing the quality of their lives. Additionally, many passengers also utilize the transit system to commute.

As a driver you get to know the folks in your community, and one can't help but wonder what their lives might be like if they didn't have access to this crucial public service? To what degree would the quality of their lives diminish with a service cut or disruption? To what degree would their lives be affected by reduced funding? I've wondered how enormously challenging life must have been for our residents before this transportation district became what it is today.

As our General Manager, Mr. Vitulli, has already stated, we also provide non-emergency medical transport both in and out of County. Traveling to Seaside, Astoria, Lincoln City, Forest Grove, and the Portland Metro area, etc.

As I've gotten to know the community, there are a few pressing questions that go through my mind weekly.

What would these vulnerable members of the community do without these services? What would some of these people that can't afford transportation, and/or don't have access a car, do without this vital service. Our veterans in need of medical attention, our disabled and elderly, what would they do if there are any cuts in funding to the STIF? In what manner, and to what degree would it impact their lives? I don't think it's an exaggeration to say that for some, the effects would be quite severe.

So, when I observe sessions where there are discussions about whether or not funding and/or services should be reduced, I really stop and wonder about all of these people that I have gotten to know as a driver, and even more personally as a dispatcher. I speak with them on the phone every week helping them plan how they're going to get a ride to and from the grocery store or to and from their medical appointments. And in some cases, I'm even scheduling a ride so that a couple can enjoy going out to a restaurant together.

I strongly stand in support of HB 2025, as increased funding absolutely affects the quality of the lives of those in my community.

Sincerely,

Doug Vernieu
Rockaway Beach