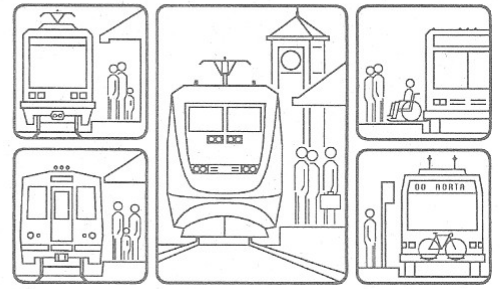


Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates

AORTA • P. O. Box 2772 • Portland, Oregon 97208-2772

Also known as OreARP • Oregon Association of Railway Passengers



June 10, 2025

HB 2025's provisions for passenger rail are game changing; the Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates endorses its dedicated rail funding through vehicle-privilege fee as an overdue boost to rail. AORTA sees the bill moving in the right direction for transit but believes an 0.5 STIF payroll-tax rate better meets transit's needs.

For decades, surveys and open houses have shown broad public support for more Willamette Valley trains. Record *Cascades* ridership confirms this. The need is more acute in eastern Oregon, now lacking any Portland-Boise bus or rail service. A 2019 meeting AORTA organized in LaGrande drew a standing-room-only crowd beyond expectations.

Three decades of studies and open houses consistently show public support but no more trains. At the same time, multiple capital projects are expanding Portland and Eugene airports—and it was a 1950s federal tax on train tickets that first grew our airways.

HB 2025 at last moves Oregon's rail program forward with resources to grow. Trains are clean and popular transportation options, especially for the 30 percent of people who don't or can't drive; elderly people needing transportation to medical centers; for communities like Albany or Salem or Baker City without air service; it eases air and highway congestion; it increases mobility at less cost than more freeway lanes or runways; and it lays foundations for future genuine high-speed rail.

AORTA is also gratified at HB 2025's support for transit. The proposed 0.3 percent STIF payroll tax is a step in the right direction. However, like the Oregon Transit Association, AORTA sees a STIF rate at 0.5 percent as meeting transit's needs. JTC meetings around Oregon consistently demonstrated the need for transit, including among the most vulnerable, combating climate change and easing highway congestion.

AORTA endorses HB 2025's dedicated rail funding through the vehicle-privilege fee and a STIF payroll tax at 0.5 percent.

Respectfully yours,

Jon Nuxoll, Eugene

President, Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates