

Submitter: Susan Bolgiano

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation Reinvestment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2025

Dear Co-Chairs McLain and Gorsek, Vice Chairs Boshart-Davis and Starr, and members of the committee:

My name is Susan Bolgiano, and I live in Halfway, Oregon. I'm testifying today because I support a 2025 transportation package that works for ALL Oregonians and reflects our shared values of safety, affordability, equity, and climate resilience. In particular, I urge you to fully fund passenger rail and public transportation.

Oregon's communities need a better transportation system that is healthy, affordable, and safe. Imagine an Oregon where we all have the freedom to choose how we get to work, school, or the doctor without risking our safety and those of our loved ones. Relatively small investments now can have huge payouts in getting all Oregonians where they need to go while improving our economy, environment, and public health.

It's essential to pass a transportation package that invests deeply in public transit and passenger rail.

Halfway, Oregon is in Eastern Oregon, the most underserved in the state. My family and I have to travel 55 miles (one way) to get to Baker City. We have lost bus transportation from Baker City. Now we must travel long distances to find a way to get to other parts of the state or to Boise for doctor's appointments. I have friends who used to make considerable use of the bus system (now no long in existence).

For many years I have worked with the Panhandle 4 Passenger Rail group in Halfway and Baker City to try and bring the Amtrak Pioneer back to Baker City. This would allow more options for the elderly, students, tourists and others who wish to travel to and from our area in safety with less pollution. It would save money and add to the economy of Eastern Oregon.

New dollars must be prioritized to meet our safety, climate, and mobility needs. If we're going to ask Oregonians to pay more, we have an obligation to put their dollars to work for the future.

That means:

- Ensuring public transportation and passenger rail has dedicated, robust, strong dedicated funding streams, such as the Vehicle Privilege Tax for Passenger Rail to raise at least \$45 million per year or the STIF payroll tax at 0.5% for Public Transportation by 2030.

- Saving Oregonians money by expanding safe streets, public transit and passenger rail that helps us save on gas, parking, and car maintenance.

We can't afford to wait. Let's build a future where every Oregonian has access to safe, reliable, and sustainable transportation options. I urge you to pass a transportation package this session that moves Oregon forward.

Sincerely,

Susan Bolgiano
Halfway, Oregon