

Submitter: Kimberly Stanchfield

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation Reinvestment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2025

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

Thank you for taking the time to consider this valuable legislation. Today is your day to make a difference in the lives of all Oregonians. I have worked with the Oregon Transit industry for over 31 years as a vendor selling and servicing transit vehicles and as a private consultant helping transit agencies purchase new fleet vehicles. I have been honored to be a part of the Oregon Transit Association Board for 15 of those years as a vendor representative. I see daily the impact lack of sustainable funding makes for these agencies. Planning for the future is near impossible when you don't know if you'll have the funds to pay drivers, maintain your vehicles to safety standards for transporting the public or obtain new vehicles when needed.

We all know the value of transit -

- * Communities across the state depend on transit. In parts of Oregon, students rely on public transportation to get to school. Many seniors and people with disabilities take the bus to the grocery store, the pharmacy, their doctor's office and more. Roughly 1 in 4 Oregonians can't or don't drive. For them, transit is an essential service, getting them where they need to go.

- * Every Oregonian benefits from transit service, even those who don't ride. Transit vehicles replace the equivalent of thousands of car trips each year, reducing traffic congestion and air pollution.

- * Transit also supports the economy. Every \$1 invested in transit generates \$5 for the local economy, according to research by the American Public Transportation Association.

- * Transit agencies employ thousands of people across Oregon, providing family-wage jobs. Streets, neighborhoods and cities with transit service are more attractive as places to live, work and do business. Transit-oriented development has transformed communities with affordable housing, retail and recreation.

We also know what's at stake -

- * Rising costs have placed transit service at risk. Driven by inflation and other economic factors, the cost of providing transit service rose by about 50% from 2019 to 2024. The COVID-19 pandemic also prompted widespread changes in the way

that people work, travel and use transit.

* Since then, transit agencies have made progress in restoring service, rebuilding ridership and reallocating resources to meet demand. At this time, service cuts would be a devastating setback for transit agencies and the riders who depend on them.

If lawmakers do not take action and pass HB 2025 in this legislative session, transit agencies across Oregon will be forced to cut service and leave tens of thousands of Oregonians stranded without the service they depend on — cutting people off from jobs and school, driving up transportation costs, and preventing many individuals from accessing health care and other vital services.

While the funding proposed in this package is not enough to allow many transit providers to expand service and some cuts will still be necessary, this increase in transit funding will prevent tens of thousands of Oregonians from being stranded without the transportation access they depend on. Please support HB 2025.

Yours,

Kimberly Stanchfield