

Submitter: Jennifer Starkey

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation Reinvestment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2025

Dear Members of the Committee,

My name is Jennifer Starkey and I live in Portland's North Piedmont neighborhood, inside a rectangle of homes bordered by I-5, Hwy 30, Columbia Blvd, and MLK Jr Blvd. I'm also the Education Director at the Columbia Slough Watershed Council, and since 2016 I have travelled to visit schools and natural areas all around Hwy 30, also known as Lombard, Killingsworth, and Sandy Blvd. Every day I witness the need for safer streets! I work exclusively with low income students in Portland Public and Reynolds school districts and it's my job to identify barriers to accessing nearby natural areas and help classrooms visit these places.

A primary barrier in all these communities is: dangerous roads. Children I work with have lost parents because they were hit by a car. I have to order a school bus to transport students to a park that is a 10 minute walk away because the pedestrian route is hot, giant 18 wheeler diesel trucks are flying down the road at 55 mph, and sidewalks have cars parked in the middle of them.

I'm here to testify in support of House Bill 2025, particularly the investments in Safe Routes to School and the Great Streets programs.

These programs are lifelines, funding safe crossings, sidewalks, lighting, and bikeways that connect people to schools, jobs, transit, and community. Without this funding, too many Oregonians, especially children, seniors, and people with disabilities, are forced to travel dangerous roads every day. Low income children deserve safe ways to walk to a park. People without a car should be able to walk or cycle safely to their schools, grocery stores, libraries, and friends.

The \$50 million for Safe Routes will save lives and ensure that our youth can walk and bike to school safely. The \$250 million for Great Streets will support local main street transformations that improve safety, support local economies, and help communities adapt to climate impacts.

Finally, I want to highlight the importance of completing our active transportation network. On-street investments must be matched with funding for off-street routes as well. Please include support for the Oregon Community Paths program to help fill these critical gaps.

Please pass HB 2025 and ensure these safety programs are fully funded.

Sincerely,

Jennifer