

Transportation testimony, HB 2025, Casey Kulla:

Chair, vice-chairs, members, and staff...for the record, my name is Casey Kulla and though I typically wear an Oregon Wild hat around here, I'm speaking today as a rural Yamhill County resident and father of two teens. I've entered into the record two recent commentaries I offered in the Yamhill County News Register about safety on Oregon's rural highways and small cities. In those essays, I observe that my drive from Grand Island to McMinnville features eight memorials to people killed by traffic violence and my drive to Salem features just about the same (some with multiple people remembered). Rural roads need safety by design, not speed by design.

To the subject at hand...HB 2025, on the whole, is good, but it lacks sufficient funding for one important component of safety for teens, for rural residents, for townies trying to get between the wee towns of western Oregon. I'm talking about the Oregon Community Paths Program, dedicated to off-right of way transportation routes. With the level of demand across the state, the program is typically way way way oversubscribed, meaning that there's far more demand by eligible, excellent projects than money to go around. I understand there is an amendment to increase the fund, and I hope you support it.

For our kids, getting from their island home to anywhere else requires physically being on roads and highways with high-speed drivers who are looking at their phones, roads with little to no shoulder before the ditch. Paths traveling alternate routes or parallel to our highways but not on the shoulder are a safe choice. But more than that, paths funded by the Community Paths Program offer freedom of movement and freedom of choice, they offer the least-cost option of transportation, they offer health for some, and they offer the independence and time off phones that so many Oregonians claim that they want for today's young people. Thank you!

May 2025: <https://newsregister.com/article?articleTitle=casey-kulla-prioritize-local-roads-and-bridges-over-expressways--1746809269--51838-->

Sept 2024: <https://newsregister.com/article?articleTitle=rising-death-tolls-dictate-putting-priority-on-safety--1727451151--50066--commentary>