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June 11, 2025

**RE: Testimony in Support of HB 2025 with Amendments to Expand Funding for the Oregon Community Paths Program**

Co-Chairs Senator Gorsek and Representative McLain, Vice-Chairs Senator Starr and Representative Boshart Davis, and all the Members of the Joint Committee on Transportation:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 2025. We write to you today on behalf of Willamette Riverkeeper to urge you to amend this bill to include expanded and sustained funding for the Oregon Community Paths (OCP) program through the Multimodal Active Transportation Fund.

As stewards of the 187-mile Willamette Water Trail and champions of river access, education, and ecological restoration, Willamette Riverkeeper believes that safe, equitable access to outdoor recreation and natural resources is fundamental to a healthy and climate-resilient Oregon. More than 80% of Oregonians report using trails and off-street paths. Yet the OCP program, which is among the only state-level funding sources for off-system active transportation infrastructure, remains grossly underfunded. In its first two funding cycles, OCP was oversubscribed by more than 4 to 1. This unmet demand leaves critical trail and river access projects stalled in communities across the state.

Currently, HB 2025 does not include new or increased funding for the Multimodal Active Transportation Fund. Without expanded support, we risk perpetuating inequities in transportation and access—particularly in rural and underrepresented communities—while also missing the opportunity to improve public health, reduce carbon emissions, and protect the health of our watersheds.

Off-street trails are not only safer alternatives to high-traffic roadways, they also provide direct connections to trailheads, boat ramps, and riverfront parks. These routes help disperse congestion, reduce costly road maintenance and stormwater impacts, and offer vital alternatives to gas-powered transportation. In this way, trail infrastructure is both a transportation investment and a climate action strategy.

Through our programs at Willamette Riverkeeper—including paddling education, river cleanups, and habitat restoration—thousands of Oregonians

connect with the Willamette River each year. Many rely on access points reachable only via off-street paths or active transportation corridors. These connections should be safe, accessible, and designed to serve all Oregonians, regardless of background or income.

We urge the Joint Committee on Transportation to:

- **Amend HB 2025 to dedicate a portion of new revenue to the Multimodal Active Transportation Fund.**
- **Expand funding for the Oregon Community Paths program** so that off-street trail and river access projects can meet the real and growing demand.
- **Recognize trails and paths as essential infrastructure** that supports watershed health, community safety, and economic vitality.

A bold transportation vision for Oregon must include investments that reflect our climate goals, our shared value for public lands and waters, and our belief in equitable access to the outdoors. HB 2025 can—and should—deliver on those commitments.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration.

Sincerely,

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