

Submitter: Alyssa Koomas

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 Alyssa Koomas and I live in Portland, Or. 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 rail, public transit, safety, active transportation, and electrification.

Oregon's communities need a better transportation system that is healthy, affordable, and safe. Imagine an Oregon where we all have access to lots of safe and affordable options for getting to the places that we need and want to go. Where walking, biking, and public transit are commuting options that will safely and reliably get you where you need to go, and where public charging stations for EVs lead to cleaner air for everyone. 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:

- Advances our climate goals.
- Is safe and affordable for all Oregonians.

In 2023, my 4-year old child was run over by a car while biking on a Neighborhood Greenway in Portland. These streets are intended to be safer for bikers, but with the increase in cars and the lack of diverters to keep cars off them, they have become just as dangerous as other streets. In a purported bike-friendly city like Portland, it is shameful that we don't have safe streets for bikers to move through the city without risking their lives. How can we build the next generation of bikers (who will then protect our future air quality and reduce traffic) if they don't have a safe place to move about the city on bikes?

Even after that accident, our family has committed to biking as often as we can - to save money, move our bodies, stay connected to our community, and to keep our air clean. When we bike we build connections with our neighbors and local businesses, and we arrive at our destination more quickly and in a better mood without the hassle of looking for parking or feeling annoyed by traffic. We help lead our school's bike bus and it is the best way to start the day, however a very small fraction of students participate due to safety concerns. When kids can walk and bike to school safely,

they gain independence, stay active, and get better grades. Funding more Safe Routes to Schools benefit not only students but our grandparents, teachers, and neighbors who rely on safe routes for transportation, exercise, and recreation.

Oregon's transportation package is an opportunity to invest in what matters most to our communities: safe streets, clean air, and reliable transit. To truly deliver for all Oregonians, including the 30% who don't or can't drive, we need a package that prioritizes access, equity, and sustainability. 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:

- Improving health and safety by funding popular but underfunded programs like Safe Routes to School, Great Streets, and Oregon Community Paths.
- Saving Oregonians money by expanding safe streets, public transit and passenger rail that helps us save on gas, parking, and car maintenance.
- Improving air quality and lowering pollution by funding clean transportation programs to help low-income Oregonians purchase electric vehicles, put more clean, zero-emission trucks on our roads, and expand charging infrastructure statewide.

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,
Alyssa Koomas
Portland, OR