

Submitter: Brian Ettling

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation Reinvestment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2025

Co-chairs Rep. McLain and Senator Gorsek and members of the Joint Transportation Committee:

My name is Brian Ettling and I live in outer NE Portland for the last 8 years with my wife. We share a car and live less than two miles from her job to reduce the wear and tear on my 23 year old car. I have been a climate organizer for the last 8 years in Portland. I use public transportation, Trimet, on almost a daily basis to attend organizing meetings, town halls, meet up with friends, and even to access some of the hiking trails in the Portland Metro area. I don't like to drive. I am afraid of getting in a car accident which could impact my health and/or totally the only car I have owned. I don't like giving money to oil companies every time I fill up my gas tank. The big fossil fuel companies still deny the reality of climate change. For over 25 years, I worked as a seasonal park ranger at Crater Lake National Park in southern Oregon where I saw the impacts of climate change with a diminishing annual snowpack and the summer fire season with hazardous wildfire smoke getting worse. The smoke from the wildfires would get so bad sometimes that visitors, especially with health issues, would cancel their vacations to Crater Lake. When visitors would cancel their vacations due to smoke, it would have a negative impact on the local businesses surrounding Crater Lake and our Oregon economy. Thus, seeing this led me to organize for climate action in Portland for the last 8 years and to use Trimet as often as I can.

Transportation is the largest source of fossil fuel pollution in Oregon. I used public transportation in the last few years to travel up to two hours to attend legislative town halls, especially for the Joint Transportation Committee members such as Senator Mark Meek's town hall in Gladstone in April, Representative Susan McLain's town hall in Hillsboro in January, Senator Khanh Pham's town hall events in east Portland, Senator Chris Gorsek's town halls in Gresham, Representative Mark Gamba's town halls in southeast Portland, etc. I use public transit by choice. However, up to 30% of Oregonians can't drive a car or can't afford to drive a car. Public transportation is essential for them to commute to their jobs, buy groceries, access healthcare, and assist their families. Therefore, I urge you in this transportation package to fully fund public transportation, such as Trimet.

I urge you to fully funding Safe Routes to School, Great Streets, and Oregon Community Paths will improve safety and quality of life for all Oregonians. A fully-funded, safe, multimodal system keeps people and goods moving and families and businesses thriving. Investing in sidewalks, bike lanes, and trails improves health by reducing chronic disease and lowering asthma rates. This is especially true for low-

income and communities of color, who are hit hardest by pollution and unsafe streets. A retired physician who is a fellow climate organizer and friend told me recently of a common expression they use in the medical field. Doctors who are experts in the harmful impacts of air pollution like to say that, 'We breathe what we burn.'

Investments in ADA-compliant sidewalks, off-street paths, and protected bike lanes ease traffic and improve safety for everyone, including drivers, such as the Great Streets Program. 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. Regardless of geography, political affiliation, or mode of travel, Oregonians said that safety is their biggest transportation need.

Even more, Oregon lacks sufficient intercity transportation options. By investing in passenger rail, we increase accessibility between cities and give Oregonians more choice in how they move.

Thank you for considering my testimony.