



www.RogueClimate.org || PO Box 1980, Phoenix, OR 97535 || 541-301-9204

Coos Bay Office: 243 S. 2nd St. Coos Bay, OR 97420 || 541- 816-0758

Re: Rogue Climate Testimony regarding HB 2025

Dear Co-Chairs McLain and Gorsek, Vice Chairs Boshart-Davis and Starr, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 2025: Relating to transportation; providing for revenue raising that requires approval by a three-fifths majority.

Rogue Climate serves and works alongside Southern Oregon and South Coast communities most impacted by climate change, including low-income, rural, youth, and communities of color, by organizing for clean energy, sustainable jobs, and a healthy environment. We do so through leadership development, political education, and campaigns for policies that benefit our communities.

In Oregon, 30% of the population does not drive or is not able to drive, disproportionately leaving a large portion of our communities without a safe way to access essential services like education, healthcare, employment and groceries. Nearly [20% of Oregon households](#) use transit weekly, and over half of [surveyed](#) residents in 2023 said they'd ride more if service expanded or improved in their communities. The Rogue Valley Transportation District serves nearly [200,000](#) people, with nearly 4,000 daily boardings. Transit access is less accessible in Coos County, with the Coos County Area Transit (CCAT) working to serve the South Coast through various transportation services. At the same time, there is increased demand for transit in Coos County. Meanwhile, climate change is causing more severe and frequent flooding that makes [travel dangerous](#) on roads that have not been maintained. Rural communities deserve investment in safe, inter-city and multi-modal infrastructure.

In conversations with folks in the South Coast, safety is a top concern. Biking is dangerous in the South Coast without sufficient bike lanes. Bus schedules aren't consistent or reliable, while bus stops are either nonexistent, not well marked or in dangerous locations. Sidewalks are limited and lack accessible ramps, forcing our neighbors in wheelchairs to travel in the street. Rural Oregonians need buses that bikers can ride, routes that run consistently and for longer in the day, and safer sidewalks and streets. Rogue Climate's community organizers in Coos Bay see



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transportation as the most significant barrier for people who want to get involved in the community.

Youth in Jackson County are frustrated that bus routes in cities like Ashland often don't run past 5pm, leaving folks without a means of transportation for evening errands, appointments, or events. Infrastructure for inter-city travel is a significant need for access to medical care, essential services, and community connection. Access to rural transportation is core to community resilience, safety and wellbeing.

Oregonians have a right for their taxes to be used thoughtfully, efficiently, and effectively. Currently, transportation costs are the [second highest](#) household expense after mortgage or rent. If we are saddling Oregonians with increased transportation taxes and fees that will further stretch Oregonians pocketbooks, we should ensure that investments benefit all Oregonians, rather than continuing to increase GHG emissions in our frontline communities through mega-projects that expand highways. Lawmakers have an opportunity to fund transportation without adding to the disproportionate burden on low-income, rural and BIPOC communities. For example, a 4% luxury vehicle tax will enable those who can afford it most to invest in safe, electrified, connected communities across Oregon.

Without investments in a multi-modal transportation system, Oregon will never meet the transportation emissions reduction [goal](#) of reducing to 80% below 1990 levels by 2050. Without significant and sustainable funding for electrification, public transit and safe streets, Oregon will fall short of its climate and public health commitments. Climate justice in our transportation needs to be prioritized. Invest in public transit, passenger rail service, and electrification, rather than expanding polluting highways.

On behalf of community members across Southern Oregon and the South Coast, we are calling on you to ensure that funding goes to rural community safety, transit, bike infrastructure and access now, not just after mega-projects are funded. **Pass a transportation package that centers safety, clean air, equity, and affordability for our communities.**

Sincerely,

Zoe Serrano, Legislative Coordinator



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