



**AORTA**  
Association of Oregon Rail and  
Transit Advocates

Co-chairs Gorsek and McLain, Co-Vice Chairs Starr and Boshart Davis, and Members of the Committee:

For the record my name is Dr. Andrea Haverkamp. I am giving remarks on behalf of the Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates, also known as AORTA. AORTA fights for public transportation, inter-city bus service, and passenger rail, which is the beating heart which powers our communities, our economy, and our state.

**AORTA is in strong support of the historic rail investment in HB 2025: the 0.5% privilege tax dedicated to rail.**

I've experienced first-hand how passenger rail connects Oregonians. The Amtrak Cascades service, which runs from Eugene to Albany, Salem, Oregon City, Portland, and beyond up to Seattle and Vancouver BC, was instrumental for my ability to see my life partner while we were long distance. Amtrak Cascades broke ridership numbers in 2023 - and then broke those records again in 2024. Rail is having a renaissance. Right now, in the Oregon segment there are only 2 trains a day in each direction, compared to 6 trains a day between Portland and Seattle, and the on-time reliability is lower than in Washington. This is, in part, due to under investment and lack of funding priority from the State of Oregon.

You have a bill in front of you that is nothing short of a game changer. **This dedicated funding will give rail continued and sustained investment.** It will allow the popular Amtrak Cascades service to continue AND grow, such as by adding more trains and filling maintenance and infrastructure backlogs for better on-time performance. Importantly, it will enable ODOT, Amtrak, and freight partners to plan, budget forward, and for rail to realize its greater potential.

The privilege tax of 0.5% towards rail lays the tracks for our region's future - progress towards our goal of 6 trains a day in each direction between Eugene and Portland, or increased range to Medford and Klamath Falls, or restoring the Amtrak Pioneer service to the Gorge and Eastern Oregon, which would connect Portland to Hood River, La Grande, Ontario, to Boise and Salt Lake City. Rail can invigorate rural economies and connect families across the region. It starts here.

On behalf of AORTA, we are All Aboard in support of the 0.5% privilege tax dedicated to rail in HB 2025 and the increased STIF funding. **We urge your support of the historic rail and transit investments in this bill.**

Thank you.

Andrea Haverkamp, Ph.D.