

Testimony on HB 2025
Before the Joint Committee on Transportation Reinvestment

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Co-Chairs Sen Gorsek and Rep McLain, Co-Vice Chairs Starr and Boshart Davis, Committee Members:

I strongly support HB 2025, an important step forward.

When JTC and ODOT toured the state, ODOT promised to “fix it first.” That is a commendable goal. Focus on ***new construction, adding more pavement*** to accommodate single-occupant vehicles, rather than maintenance, inflates future costs, something ***we cannot afford.***¹

We have a budget crisis, not so much because we have lacked sufficient transportation funds, but because focus has been on highway ***traffic flow***.

Road expansion projects are often sugar-coated as safety enhancement projects – a sales pitch for more pavement. Roadway statistics consistently tell a very different story. If we want to **improve traffic flow** and **safety**, and **reduce costs**, adding pavement for SOVs is not the solution.

Other nations are far ahead of the US in passenger mobility. Japan’s Shinkansen rail system opened in 1964. Today it carries 370 million passengers annually at speeds up to 200 mph. There has not been one traffic-related fatality or injury in over 60 years of service. It will be a long time before we can achieve the success Japan has accomplished, but **with HB 2025 we begin to move in that direction today.**

Rail, both passenger and freight, and **public transportation** are Safe, Economical, Environmental and Equitable.

I encourage adoption of Oregon Transit Association’s request to extend the payroll tax ramp to a very modest one-half of one percent to allow for meaningful ***statewide*** transit improvements.

The budget crisis will resolve itself, and we will have a stronger economy and healthier citizenry when we provide a balanced transportation system for both people and freight.

Thank you! I appreciate the long hours you are dedicating to public service.

¹ On February 24, 2025, Brian Worley, County Road Program Director of the Association of Oregon Counties testified before the Joint Transportation Committee (JTC) that ignoring roadway maintenance costs ***5-12 times more*** than maintenance.