

Submitter: Vicki Schmall

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation Reinvestment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2025

Dear Co-Chairs McLain and Gorsek and Members of the Committee,

I am writing this letter in support of HB 2025 and the increase in transit funding. The increased funding for the STIF program will help prevent significant cuts to transit service in Oregon, especially for people who cannot drive as a result of disability, aging and/or health-related changes. For over 40 years, I have worked with many older adults who would have experienced significant isolation and other limitations if transit was not available. Isolation often impacts health and results in increased health costs. The availability of transportation is significant to quality of life. On a personal level, I have Multiple Sclerosis and I experienced paralysis for 8 months as a result of a major flareup of the M.S.. I could not drive, and even years later, I am still limited to driving locally. If I had not had a husband, a program such as Ride Connection would have been vital for me.

I am currently a Board member for Ride Connection. I see firsthand how STIF dollars connect vulnerable Oregonians to work, medical appointments, grocery shopping, school and their communities. Ride Connection leverages STIF dollars in partnership with Washington County to provide a needed and popular shuttle service in rural areas. Without this shuttle service, people would not have affordable transit alternatives.

The funding proposed in HB 2025 is not enough to allow many transit providers, like Ride Connection, to expand service to meet the demands for transportation. Some cuts will still be necessary; however, the increase in transit funding will prevent tens of thousands of Oregonians from being stranded without the transportation access they need and depend on.

Please support HB 2025.