

Submitter: Helena Birecki

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation Reinvestment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2025

Hello Co-Chairs McLain, Gorsek, and members of the Committee

This testimony expands on the 2 minute testimony I presented at the hearing: My name is Helena Birecki. I've lived in Portland since September, and before that I lived in south Tillamook County. I do not own a car. I get most places on bicycle combined with public transit. Here in Portland and Beaverton, I've been really impressed with the bicycle and pedestrian paths that get you to where you need to go over and around big roads and highways. I really wish there had been something like that to get around the junction of Highway 101 and 18 when I was bicycling to the doctor in Lincoln City.

I urge you to increase funding to the Community Paths program in addition to the proposed funding for Great Streets, Safe Routes to School, and public transportation. To paraphrase what many others said so movingly in the hearing: while 30% of Oregonians cannot or do not drive, the ability to get to work, school, the grocery store, or community events is essential to each individual and family's lives and to Oregon's economy.

I'd also like to note electric bicycles are a game changer for some of my friends—enabling them to get to work in an affordable, time-efficient, and public-health friendly way, so I strongly support E-bike rebates to make E-bikes possible for more Oregonians.

Finally, for those of us getting places on our feet or our pedals, car and truck exhaust is a real burden on our lungs. I now cross both Highway 405 and the 5 regularly, and especially when I go to north Portland the pollution makes it hard to breathe. A speedy transition from internal combustion to electric vehicles would make our air much healthier. Unfortunately, the current bill makes it even more expensive for people to drive electric vehicles than internal combustion engine ones, and provides no support for EV charging infrastructure, strongly tipping the scales towards choices which cause more pollution, more public health burdens, more emergency room visits from asthma attacks, and more climate change. That's not ok now, and its not ok for our collective futures.

Please amend the bill to deprioritize “major projects”- especially harmful highway widening— in order to first fund community paths, ebike rebates, EV charging infrastructure, and revise fees to facilitate the transition to electric vehicles rather than

impede it. Our health and our futures depend on it. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.