

Submitter: Ken Bonetti

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation Reinvestment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2025

Dear Members of the Joint Committee on Transportation Reinvestment,

My name is Ken Bonetti of North Bend]. I'm testifying today because I would like Oregon to have a much improved, safer, cleaner, more accessible and more accountable transportation system that adequately and equitably funds projects, not just big ones in urban areas, but rural county transportation as well. I can support a HB2025 transportation package that works for ALL Oregonians and reflects our shared values of safety, affordability, equity, and climate resilience.

North Bend and Coos Bay has the most inadequate, car-centered, pedestrian and bicycle-unsafe infrastructure I have ever experienced. During my nearly 50 years of employment after high school, I commuted on a bicycle or on foot year around for more than 90 percent of those years. Since moving to the Oregon Bay Area, I have not once commuted on a bicycle. It's too dangerous for lack of proper infrastructure and very few designated bike lanes. Walking along most main streets and roads feels hazardous as sidewalks are very close to the traffic flow. There are no painted buffers and on many stretches no sidewalks or they are discontinuous mid-block forcing pedestrians into the street. Most routes lack consistent accessibility with utility poles and other obstacles placed in the middle of sidewalks leaving little to no room for a wheelchair or cart. There also is a crying need for adequate and convenient mass transit opportunities within and between cities.

I do have serious misgivings about some of the bill's priorities. Currently, the package lacks any investments that address climate change and air pollution through clean, electric transportation. If only the roads are improved enabling more traffic the bill may actually contribute to climate change. As drafted, this package will fail to deliver needed investments in clean, electric vehicles or charging infrastructure, while simultaneously imposing punishing new fees that specifically target electric vehicle drivers creating a strong disincentive. Large polluting fossil fuel-powered vehicles should be taxed instead. I am also concerned that the current version of the package adds nearly a dozen new fees and taxes, costs that fall hardest on low-income, rural, and BIPOC communities already facing unfair burdens. The bill's policy and funding deficiencies must be addressed to make the bill truly effective for promoting a cleaner climate, better and safer mobility that is accessible and equitable. New dollars must be prioritized to meet these safety, climate, and mobility needs. If Oregonians are told to pay more, there is an obligation to put their dollars to work for the future.

Additionally, large-scale and costly road expansions in the Portland area demand trade-offs from funding for the rest of the state. By ensuring coastal, central, eastern

and southern Oregonians have a fair share of an adequate fund appropriation, we can create a better future for everyone.

Oregon's rural communities need better transportation systems that are healthy, affordable, and safe. Imagine an Oregon where we all can transit or commute safely. Relatively small investments now can have huge benefits in getting all Oregonians where they need to go while improving our economy, environment, and public health.

Sincerely,
Ken Bonetti
North Bend, Oregon