

Submitter: Jeff Acciaioli
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation Reinvestment
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2025
June 13, 2025

Joint Committee on Transportation Reinvestment
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Support for HB 2025 – STIF funding

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

My name is Jeffrey Acciaioli, and I serve as the Transit Operations Manager at Hood River County Transportation District, who operates as Columbia Area Transit (CAT). CAT is the public transit provider for Hood River County and connects the Columbia River Gorge region with the Portland Metropolitan region. CAT provides fixed route, demand response and intercity express services. I'm writing today in strong support of House Bill 2025.

At CAT, we provide essential transportation services for our growing rural communities. Our riders rely on us to get to work, medical appointments, school, grocery stores, and other critical destinations. We help people connect to the airport, to each other, and to health care centers that many communities don't have access to locally. For many of our riders, we are the only option.

We're based in a town of just 8,000 people. We employ 25 local staff and recently moved over 11,000 passengers in a single month. That's more riders than the entire population of our town. Rural transit is not a luxury—it's a lifeline that our community depends on every day.

CAT also plays a vital role in emergency response. We've provided evacuation support during wildfires and snowstorms, transported people during the COVID-19 pandemic, and helped move students during an active shooter incident. We work closely with local fire departments and law enforcement agencies, and our ability to respond in emergencies depends on stable and sustainable funding.

In addition to our essential daily services, CAT plays a key role in supporting tourism and highway safety. We serve heavily visited natural areas like Multnomah Falls, Dog

Mountain, and Mt. Hood Meadows, helping to reduce dangerous traffic and congestion along SR 14, I-84, and Highway 35. Many of these destinations have become so overcrowded that they've implemented permit systems. Without transit options, visitors often park on road shoulders or even stop in travel lanes on I-84, creating serious backups and safety risks. Our buses offer a safer, more sustainable alternative. On peak days, we're filling our 40-foot buses to capacity—clear proof that the demand isn't just growing; it's already here.

Despite all this progress, we're already facing funding cuts that could impact these essential services. As the Transit Operations Manager I see how costs are rising, and many are beyond our control. Here are some examples of expenses that STIF funds assist with:

1. Vehicle Insurance: Since 2015, CAT's vehicle insurance has increased from \$1,115 per vehicle to \$2,650. This is on average a 15% increase each year.

2. Vehicle Purchases: In 2019 CAT purchased a vehicle for \$78,828 and in 2023 a similar transit vehicle was purchased for \$153,585. In four years the cost of a standard small transit vehicle has doubled.

House Bill 2025 is a necessary investment in rural transit. Our community is telling us clearly: we don't need reductions—we need expansion.

Thank you for your time and for considering the very real needs of rural Oregon.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Acciaioli