



NORTHEAST EMERGENCY FOOD PROGRAM

— A program of EMOregon —

Dear Joint Committee On Transportation Co-Chairs, Senator Gorsek and Representative McLain, and members of the Committee:

I am writing to ask you to support public transit in this legislative session of the Oregon State Legislature.

The Northeast Emergency Food Program – part of the Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon – offers free groceries three times a week from a church basement in the Cully neighborhood of Portland, Oregon. In a typical week our pantry serves 1,000 families with an average of 50 pounds of food each, worth \$200-250 at retail.

Although the most common zip code of our clients is 97218, where the pantry is located, clients come from all over East Portland and beyond. We have a large contingent of clients who take TriMet route 72 from 97266 (SE Portland). We collaborate with TriMet staff to address crowding that occurs when the pantry is open because the demand is so great!

We know that all of our clients face challenges beyond food insecurity. Hunger is most likely to affect people of color, people with disabilities and other societal disadvantages. It is so easy to help households facing hardship save money on groceries and transportation by making cost-effective investments in food banks and transit service. When we do this, we make it possible for these households to use their scarce resources to meet their most urgent needs, from clothing and medicine to rent and utilities.

In rural and urban communities alike, we believe that investments in safe and efficient public transportation create the same kind of benefits we are trying to make every day here in Oregon's largest food pantry. As you consider the important transportation bills before your committee, we ask that you find ways to continue funding public transit in our community and across the state.

Very respectfully,

Jon Makler, Manager
Northeast Emergency Food Program