

Submitter:

Melissa Kostelecky

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Joint Committee On Transportation Reinvestment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2025

Dear Chairs McLain and Gorsek and members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my support for HB 2025, including the proposed increases in transit and active transportation funding, as well as funding for Great Streets and Safe Routes to School. However, I strongly urge you to remove the provision requiring a minimum of 12' lanes on freight routes. I also urge you to revise the bill to allocate less funding toward freeway expansion and to prioritize these dollars towards better transportation options for Oregonians.

Our family of four relies on only one car, and for most trips outside our Portland neighborhood, we primarily travel by bike and public transit. It is extremely important to us to have safe routes for our two elementary-aged kids to get to school, as well as a safe, convenient and comfortable public transit system for trips farther away. Not having to rely on a second car has saved our own family thousands of dollars every year, and helps keep our city's air clean. It also helps us teach our kids about the importance of caring for our environment.

Freeway expansions such as ODOT's current projects in the Rose Quarter and Abernathy Bridge, on the other hand, do nothing to relieve congestion in the long run, and threaten to burden our kids' future with multi-billion-dollar cost overruns that will result in further maintenance needs down the road. Other countries have figured out how to improve congestion by offering more choice via robust public transportation systems, and Oregon must do so as well.

Finally, I strongly urge you to remove the provision requiring 12' lanes on freight corridors. ODOT's own Blueprint for Urban Design stipulates that lane widths of no more than 11' are ideal on these routes, and legislation requiring 12' as a minimum removes decision-making from ODOT's own engineers and compromises our safety. Wider lanes are known to contribute to faster speeds and increase distances for pedestrians to cross safely. We frequently walk and bike across ODOT roads like SE Powell Blvd, which is often a terrifying endeavor. This is one of the deadliest streets in our state, and local safety advocates should not be hamstrung in our efforts to make our communities safer.

Thank you for your continued support for active and public transportation, as well as to our communities safety and economic future.

Thank you,  
Melissa Kostecky