



To: Joint Committee on Transportation Reinvestment

From: Anthony Castaneda, SEIU 503

Date: June 12, 2025

RE: TRIP Transportation Package

Dear Co-chairs McLain and Gorsek, Co-vice chairs Boshart Davis and Starr, and members of the committee,

For the record, my name is Anthony Castaneda, and I am writing on behalf of SEIU 503 in support of increased investments in Oregon's transit and paratransit system.

Public transportation is more than a system of buses, trains, and routes—it is a lifeline for working families, a cornerstone of economic mobility, and a critical piece of public infrastructure that benefits Eastern, Rural, Coastal, Central, and Metro Oregon. Increased investment in public transit will not only expand access, safety, and reliability for riders, but also drive economic growth.

Organized labor has played a vital role in the history and advancement of public transportation in this country and in our state. Unions like the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU), AFSCME, SEIU and others have long fought—not just for the rights of transit workers—but for the expansion and protection of public transit itself.

From advocating for federal and state funding, to organizing riders and workers in campaigns against service cuts and fare hikes, labor unions have stood at the intersection of public service and expanding services to seniors, people with disabilities, and veterans. We have worked in coalition with community groups, disability advocates, environmental organizations, and riders to ensure that public transportation is accessible, affordable, and responsive to the needs of the public.

And let's not forget: public transportation systems are major employers of union labor, providing stable, family-supporting jobs with fair wages, benefits, and training. Investment in transit is also an investment in these good jobs—and in the working people who keep our communities moving.

For working families, access to reliable public transportation means opportunity. It means being able to get to work on time, access affordable child care, attend school, and reach health care without the crushing costs of car ownership, insurance, fuel, and maintenance. SEIU represents downtown Portland janitors and security guards, healthcare and building service workers, and airport workers in Oregon and Southwest Washington.

Every dollar saved on transportation is a dollar that can be spent in local economies. Transit affordability supports household stability, especially for low-income families, seniors, students, and people with disabilities.

For businesses, public transit expands the labor pool, reduces employee lateness and absenteeism, and increases customer access. It boosts local economies, attracts investment, and helps cities and towns grow more sustainably and equitably.

State funding is essential to ensure that our transit systems remain accessible and affordable in less populated areas like Coastal, Rural, Eastern, and Central Oregon.

In closing, I urge you to support increased state investment in public transportation—not just as a transit rider, but as an Oregon who believes in a future where no one is denied opportunity because they can't afford or access a car.

This is our chance to build a public transportation system that is reliable, safe, sustainable, and inclusive of all. Working families, businesses, and entire communities are counting on you.

Thank you.