

June 26, 2025

Dear Co-chairs Pham and McLain, and members of the committee:

As a physician and advocate in several organizations, I am strongly in favor of sustainable funding for efficient and effective transportation that addresses equity, climate change and the needs of all Oregonians.

Coming to a compromise is essential. Thank you for working extensively to develop such a bill. While we have not seen all the details of the amendment, preserving or increasing the amount of funding for transit is absolutely essential. Future discussions should include alternative sources to the payroll tax. But taxing at 0.3% or higher at this time is essential to maintain and support needed transportation. Using the bus lines up and down the I5 corridor and between cities across Oregon is a safe and effective method of transportation and removes numerous cars from the road thus reducing carbon emissions. While it is an option for me, using transit is a requirement for 30% of Oregonians who can't afford or can't drive their own car.

We also strongly support increased funding for rail and in the near future would appreciate seeing increased support not just for passenger rail but for rail freight improvements. Rail is highly effective with lower carbon emissions than many other types of transportation. Developing new rail lines to separate freight from passenger rail will improve efficiency and reliability.

By removing the transfer tax, you have reduced the more progressive nature of the previous taxation package but the increase in funding for the privilege tax will not affect the lower income people who purchase vehicles in the private market rather than through dealerships. This increase in Privilege tax will maintain some of the safety funding, and support for Safe Routes to School, Great Streets and Jurisdictional transfer should be prioritized over major road projects.

Catherine Thomasson, MD