

Submitter: Andy Nelson
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Transportation
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4008

In rural Washington County, tens of thousands of Oregonians live without dedicated mass transit or the means to afford a car. Thanks to the STIF program, however, they have a way to work, school and critical medical appointments. Washington County, teaming up with Ride Connection, uses SFIF funds to fuel service to these households that live beyond the TriMet service area. Fixed-route loops in Forest Grove, Cornelius, King City and other rural areas are a lifeline for schoolchildren, seniors and people with disabilities. However, the strength of STIF is waning as the costs of providing transit and demand increase. That's why I am writing in support of House Bill 4008. This legislation would create a Task Force to bring together a diverse set of stakeholders to look at how to fund transit operations and maintenance statewide. Rural Washington County is among dozens in Oregon that rely on transit funding to meet the everyday needs of Oregonians. In Southern Oregon, for instance, Rogue Valley Transportation District has been forced to cut over 60% of service, 10 of 16 bus lines, and laid off 82 employees because STIF funding lags behind what is needed . Thank you for considering my testimony. - Andy Nelson, CEO, Ride Connection, Inc., a nonprofit that provides more than a million rides a year for seniors, people with disabilities and low-income households.