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On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Transportation  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4085

Living Opportunities supports adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities so they can live, work, and thrive in their communities. Reliable transportation is not optional for the people we support, it is a foundational requirement for employment, health care access, and full community participation.

For many people with disabilities, a significant mobility gap still exists. Some individuals cannot drive due to disability-related limitations, safety concerns, or cost. Fixed-route public transit does not meet all transportation needs, particularly for non-routine trips or locations outside standard routes. Paratransit services, while essential, often require trips to be scheduled days or weeks in advance, which significantly limits flexibility, independence, and personal choice.

These transportation barriers have real and measurable downstream impacts. They contribute to missed medical appointments, reduced job retention, fewer opportunities for education and community engagement, and increased social isolation. Transportation access directly affects quality of life and economic participation.

HB 4085 helps address these challenges by creating a clear, statewide framework for autonomous vehicles, including for-hire services, while establishing defined operational and safety expectations. The bill requires automated driving systems to reach a minimal-risk condition or request intervention when they cannot safely perform the driving task. It requires operation consistent with Oregon vehicle laws and applicable federal safety standards, establishes clear financial responsibility and insurance requirements, and mandates first-responder interaction plans as part of authorization to operate for hire. Importantly, it provides statewide consistency and avoids a patchwork of local rules that could hinder safe and equitable deployment.

We are encouraged by disability-centered work already taking place in this space. Partnerships such as the collaboration between Waymo and The Arc San Francisco demonstrate that autonomous ride services can be developed in direct partnership with disability communities, allowing real-world learning about rider experiences, accessibility needs, and remaining barriers. This type of engagement should be the expectation, not the exception.

As Oregon moves forward, implementation matters. We urge an approach that meaningfully includes people with disabilities in planning and evaluation, including individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and mobility impairments.

Rider experiences should be accessible, with clear pickup instructions, supportive in-app accessibility features, and options that work for people who do not independently use smartphones. Autonomous services should be coordinated with existing transit and paratransit systems so they complement, rather than disrupt, essential public transportation.

These considerations are not barriers to progress. They are the pathway to equitable progress.

The Oregon Department of Transportation has noted that automated vehicles can increase travel options and mobility for people with disabilities and others who cannot or choose not to drive. HB 4085 moves Oregon toward a clear, safety-focused framework that can unlock those benefits.

For the people we support, expanded mobility means expanded independence. I respectfully urge the committee to support HB 4085