

Submitter: Christian Watchie

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On
Capital Construction

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1601

Dear Chair Girod, Chair Nosse, and members of the committee,

I am writing to ask you NOT to redirect funding from the Oregon Community Paths and Safe Routes to School programs to highway maintenance and operations as currently laid out in the -3 amendment to SB 1601.

We support redirecting funds to operations and maintenance of the current transportation system, but not at the expense of the safety of our most vulnerable community members, our schoolchildren and others who cannot drive. We suggest major highway project funding be redirected to meet the current highway operations and maintenance needs instead.

More than 80% of Oregonians report using local trails, that is a higher percentage of Oregonians than those that drive. Off-street paths provide the absolute safest places in our community for people of all ages and abilities to walk and bike. The Oregon Community Paths and Safe Routes to School program are already significantly underfunded, and people continue to die on our streets as a result.

Please preserve the following funds from any budget cuts:

Multimodal Active Transportation Fund: funded in part by the bike tax and currently directed entirely to Oregon Community Paths program to fund safe, off-street alternatives.

Transportation Operating Funds: non-street funding that funds passenger rail, paths, and paratransit).

Safe Routes to School Funds

The amount of funding provided for these programs is already minimal compared to the need and yet we are making great progress with the funds available. Please do not stop this critical progress in making Oregon roads safer.

Thank you.

Christian Watchie

Eugene, Oregon