

March 2nd, 2026
RE: TKO Opposes SB 1601 with -3 amendment



TRAILKEEPERS OF OREGON

Dear Chair Girod, Chair Nosse, and Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Steve Kruger (District 42 constituent), and I serve as Executive Director of Trailkeepers of Oregon (TKO), a statewide nonprofit that mobilizes volunteers to maintain and protect Oregon's trail systems.

Each year, TKO mobilizes thousands of volunteers who contribute nearly 23,000 hours of trail maintenance, restoration, and public engagement across Oregon. We work in partnership with federal, state, and local land managers who are already facing significant staffing and maintenance shortfalls. Community paths and off-street active transportation infrastructure are essential extensions of Oregon's broader trail and recreation network, providing safe access points into natural areas and critical connections within our communities.

I respectfully urge you to oppose the -3 amendment to SB 1601 as written. Redirecting funding from the Oregon Community Paths program, the Multimodal Active Transportation Fund, Transportation Operating Funds, and Safe Routes to School in order to backfill highway maintenance undermines the safety and accessibility of Oregon's most vulnerable users — including school children, families, seniors, and those who cannot or choose not to drive.

Off-street paths are often the safest transportation facilities we have. They reduce conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians, close dangerous network gaps, and create safe corridors for biking and walking. These programs are already underfunded relative to demand. Further reductions would delay critical safety improvements and slow the development of infrastructure that benefits communities across Oregon — urban and rural alike.

We recognize and support the need to address highway maintenance challenges. However, we encourage the Legislature to seek solutions that do not come at the expense of active transportation safety and community connectivity.

Oregon's transportation system must work for everyone. Preserving investments in community paths and Safe Routes to School ensures that children, families, and everyday Oregonians have safe places to move through their communities.

Thank you for your consideration and for your service to our state.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Steve Kruger', is written over the typed name.

Steve Kruger
Executive Director

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