

Submitter: Jeffrey Weitzel

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 Oregon Community Paths, Safe Routes to School, and Amtrak Cascades to highway maintenance and operations as currently laid out in the -3 amendment to SB 1601.

While I am sympathetic to the financial bind we face with regard to transportation funding in Oregon, this solution is shameful. Children should be able to walk bicycle to school. Pedestrians and cyclists need routes they don't have to share with cars. People who can't drive need a means to travel up and down the Willamette Valley.

Rescuing our fiscally unsustainable system of motor vehicle infrastructure at the expense of schoolchildren, the disabled, and people who choose more responsible means of transportation would be a crime. How about redirecting major highway project funding to highway operations and maintenance 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 tragically 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 para-transit)
- Safe Routes to School Funds

Respectfully,

Jeff Weitzel
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