



March 2, 2026

**Opposition to SB SB 1601-3: No Cuts to Safety**

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

On behalf of the Oregon Trails Coalition, and as a steering committee member of the Move Oregon Forward coalition, I write to oppose the cuts to Oregon Community Paths, Transportation Operating Fund programs, and Safe Routes to School as currently laid out in the -3 amendment to SB 1601.

We support redirecting funds to the operations and maintenance of the current transportation system, but not at the expense of the safety and mobility 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, a higher percentage of Oregonians than those that drive. Off-street multi-use paths provide the absolute safest places in our communities for people of all ages and abilities to walk and bike, yet our state constitution prohibits any of our stateway highway fund from being spent on off-street paths. The -3 amendment would cut two thirds of the existing Multimodal Active Transportation funding, the only state funding dedicated to walking and biking paths through the Oregon Community Paths program. It is unconscionable to redirect this precious, non-highway fund, largely composed of bicycle excise taxes paid by Oregonians, away from safe walking and biking paths in order to address a hole in the state highway fund. There has been a giant hole in the Oregon Community Paths budget from the start. Eligible community grant requests for this popular program outstripped available funds by more than 4 to 1 over its first two funding cycles. ODOT purposefully lets this fund accrue over multiple biennia to even have enough funding to run a single grant cycle. There is no room to cut.

Redirecting funding from the equally popular and underfunded Safe Routes to School program and the community mobility programs under the Transportation Operating Fund umbrella is equally indefensible. These programs were built with broad community support because they work. They save lives, support the health of our kids, reduce pollution, lower household costs, and provide lifelines for rural non-drivers.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephanie Noll". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Stephanie Noll, Director, Oregon Trails Coalition