

Submitter: Jon Nuxoll

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1601

It is astonishing that after so much focus on transportation last session, there should be a proposal to cut funding from the rail program for highways, as proposed in the -3 amendment to SB1601, and to ask the Legislature to reject it just so the passenger rail program may continue to tread water.

Voters will soon have their say on increasing highway funding in the gas-tax referendum; let the voters have their say from that rather than gutting public transportation funding for roads. Events of the last weekend portend instability in energy markets, making multi-modal transportation more vital, including Eugene-Portland rail passenger service (with record levels of ridership, and new equipment coming in months). ConnectOregon further provides capital funding for rail (freight as well as passenger) and other infrastructure projects.

It is discouraging to have to write to ask the Legislature just to keep what we have, in a passenger rail program that lags behind progress in California and Washington (not to mention Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Wisconsin and Minnesota, states that have expanded rail passenger in the past year). I oppose the -3 amendment, with great regret and frustration that this is even being considered.