

Submitter: Jessica Vaughan

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1601

Chair and Members of the Committee,

I submit this testimony in strong opposition to Senate Bill 1601 as modified by the -3 amendment.

While the original bill text concerns judicial salaries, the -3 amendment would instead impose significant cuts to essential transportation programs that support safety, climate resilience, and community connectivity across Oregon.

Specifically, the amendment proposes:

\$17 million in cuts to Safe Routes to School

\$42 million in cuts to Connect Oregon, including funding for Amtrak Cascades

\$35 million in cuts to bridge preservation and seismic resilience projects

\$8 million in cuts to the Community Paths program

These are not expendable line items. They are investments in public safety, climate responsibility, and long-term infrastructure resilience.

Safe Routes to School funding builds sidewalks and bike lanes near schools — infrastructure that protects children and reduces traffic congestion. Community Paths funding creates multi-use paths that expand safe mobility options for families, seniors, and commuters. Connect Oregon supports passenger rail, including Amtrak Cascades, which provides a lower-emissions alternative to driving and flying. Bridge preservation and seismic resilience projects protect communities from catastrophic infrastructure failure.

Cutting these programs does not solve the underlying structural funding challenges facing ODOT. Instead, it undermines progress toward safer, more sustainable transportation while delivering relatively modest budget savings in comparison to the scale of the agency's overall funding gap.

Oregon must not balance short-term budget pressures on the backs of programs that advance safety, climate goals, and equitable access to mobility. If we are serious

about addressing maintenance and operations deficits, we need comprehensive, forward-looking solutions — not reactive cuts to programs that are already underfunded and critical to community wellbeing.

I urge you to reject the -3 amendment and protect funding for Safe Routes to School, Connect Oregon, bridge resilience, and Community Paths.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Jessica Vaughan  
Portland, Oregon