

Submitter: Max Farbman

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 oppose the proposed cuts to our transportation program funding. Oregon should not balance its books at the expense of schoolchildren, disabled residents, or communities already facing rising costs, unemployment pressures, and climate impacts.

As someone who commutes regularly by both bike and car, I experience firsthand how important safe transportation infrastructure is. I bike for many of my daily trips, but I also drive, and I see from both perspectives how vulnerable people are on our roads when safe crossings, sidewalks, and paths are missing. These investments are not abstract policy decisions—they determine whether people in our communities can get where they need to go safely.

Safety is not negotiable. The state is proposing to take \$17 million from Safe Routes to School and \$8 million from Oregon Community Paths, which represents more than 60% of each program's budget. These programs fund the crossings, sidewalks, and paths that allow children to get to school without risking their lives and allow people of all ages and abilities to move around their communities safely.

As a commuter, I want the kids in my neighborhood to be able to walk or bike to school safely. I want families to have options besides driving for every trip. And as a driver, I know that well-designed walking and biking infrastructure makes roads safer and more predictable for everyone, including those of us behind the wheel.

These programs were created with broad support because they work. They reduce pollution, lower transportation costs for households, and help keep communities—urban and rural alike—connected. Cutting programs that make transportation more affordable and safer for everyday Oregonians is the wrong direction.

The proposed budget cuts are also not a sustainable solution. When budgets tighten, smaller programs are often targeted because they appear easier to cut. But focusing on these line items is like stepping over dollars to pick up dimes. The short-term savings are small, while the long-term costs—in safety, public health, and infrastructure needs—are much higher.

I urge you to protect funding for Safe Routes to School and Oregon Community Paths and prioritize the safety and mobility of Oregon's communities