

Submitter: Aron Klein

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1601

Chair Girod, Chair Nosse, and members of the committee,
I am writing to oppose the cuts to Safe Routes to Schools and Oregon Community Paths as currently laid out in the -3 amendment to SB 1601.

Oregon can save transportation costs freeing up billions of dollars by investing in critical bicycle and pedestrian safety. By doing so, it will reduce strain on our more costly highway system.

While I support redirecting funds to operations and maintenance of the current transportation system, I oppose doing this at the expense of the safety 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.

Safe Routes to School programs are critical for safety and for community, and hugely popular. In addition, 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:

Safe Routes to School Funds

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)

Thank you,

Aron