

In SB 1601-3, we urge *protecting* the **Connect Oregon Fund** designated for active transportation and rail that would be cut in Sections 16 and 17, the **Multimodal Transportation Fund** that would be cut in Sections 18 and 19, and the **Safe Routes to School Fund** that would be cut in Section 20.

We recognize that ODOT has a serious budget deficit, largely due to historic large expenditures on highway renovation or widening projects, such as the half-billion dollars spent so far on the IBRP. It is inappropriate then for SB 1601-3 to cut programs that support reduction of road deaths and injuries, multimodal transportation and transit represent a tiny portion of the overall transportation budget and have been traditionally underfunded.

About a third of Oregonians do not drive. Many of these are people who don't have the option of driving, such as those with disabilities, the elderly and those with limited incomes. We must not close the ODOT budget gap by cutting programs on which they depend, or we are cutting off their access to jobs and to medical care.

Safety needs to be prioritized. That is why these programs are crucial. If you take \$17 million from Safe Routes to School and \$8 million from Oregon Community Paths, you are gutting those budgets. Without this funding, we won't have the crossings, sidewalks, and paths that allow children to get to class without risking their lives.

It is unfair to cut programs that affect the life of so many people who depend on these programs, when these budgets represent such a tiny amount of the overall transportation budget. And such cuts certainly are no long-term answer to the budget crisis. Sadly, bills that would have contributed to long-term funding such as a transit funding task force, collection of data for a rational Road User Charge, and modernized bond management did not pass in this session. It is imperative that we achieve a comprehensive funding plan in 2027.

The cuts to these programs, nearly \$50 million from safety, rail, transit, and EV charging, will continue dependence on gasoline cars and trucks, which impedes progress on reducing emissions. This does not adhere to EO 25-29 which requires pollution reduction through transition to cleaner transportation.

*We urge protection of the funds in Connect Oregon for active transportation and rail, the Multimodal Transportation Fund, and the Safe Routes to School Fund.*

As written, SB 1601-3 will worsen barriers to employment and to health care for those who don't drive, will increase family costs, will impede progress on greater road safety, and will worsen emissions. If these programs are sacrificed now, then these priorities need to be front-and-center in the 2027 transportation package.

**Oregonians need a safer, cleaner, multimodal transportation system that works for all. SB 1601-3 takes us in the wrong direction.**

Thanks for all you do for the people of Oregon,

Joseph Stenger and Janice Thompson, Co-Chairs of Transportation, MCAT  
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