

2-28-2017

House Committee on Transportation Policy
Representative Caddy McKeown, Chair
900 Court Street NE, Room 431
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: Support for HB 2745 – Transit Funding

Chair McKeown and Members of the Committee:

I am writing today to urge you to support the bill currently before the legislature, HB 2745, which will give voters in Central Oregon a choice on whether their areas should fund a public transit system.

In 2012, I was elected to the Prineville City Council and served as chair for Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council (COIC), which operates the regional transit system in our area. Several years ago, the COIC staff came to the board of directors and asked for direction on how to operate and fund the region's transit system for the long haul. A team of regional and elected leaders debated a variety of options and ultimately agreed on the concept that led to HB 2475.

This concept is a new and innovate approach that provides flexibility and local control, especially for rural communities. I was adamantly opposed to a regional transit district because the law requires all citizens under that district to pay the same tax. That would mean a citizen living in rural Crook County would pay the same in taxes as a citizen living on Bend's west side. There's nothing fair or equitable about that.

Ensuring citizens in our rural communities have access to jobs, education, and medical appointments is critical and many of those services exist in Bend. The health of regional transit depends heavily on cooperation with Bend so that communities like Prineville have access to transit services. HB 2745 ensures we maintain regional cooperation and a taxing structure that is fair for individual communities.

Some communities may choose to ask voters to support funding initiatives, and other communities may not be ready any time soon. Giving Central Oregon communities the option to seek transit funding from voters is important to our region.

So please, encourage the House Transportation Committee to move HB 2745 forward, and support its passage in this session. Thank you for giving local control of future transit initiatives into the hands of Central Oregon voters.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jason S. Carr". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jason Carr
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