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February 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.

As Associate Vice President of OSU-Cascades, I am working to operate and grow a 4-year university campus in Central Oregon that serves residents of Deschutes, Crook, and Jefferson Counties. Many of our students rely on public transportation to get to campus as they work toward their goal of receiving a 4-year degree. I believe that HB 2745 will be critical for improving regional and local transit options, reducing the overall cost of degree attainment by reducing transportation costs and ultimately providing more students access to higher education.

A clarification to ORS190 offers a number of benefits to our Central Oregon Communities. It gives them local control -- each city can choose the appropriate level of service, funding amount, and tool for funding transit in their community. It maximizes efficiency, by retaining regional management for the transit system, minimizing costs and optimizing service. Some communities may 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.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelly Sparks". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kelly Sparks  
Associate Vice President, OSU-Cascades