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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.

Transportation produces 37% of Oregon's climate changing pollution, the largest source. Public transportation removes the equivalent of over 202,000 single-occupant vehicles from Portland area roads each day. As Central Oregon grows and traffic increases in the region, the Oregon League of Conservation Voters understands that we need to invest in transit services to meet increasing demand, connect communities and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

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 streamlined and convenient service. It drives economic development, helping local companies attract workers by giving employees a public transportation option that saves time and money. 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.

At the August 18, 2016 Joint Committee on Transportation hearing in Bend you heard first hand stories from transit riders about the need for improved transit in our region. This is an opportunity to put local control of future transit initiatives into the hands of Central Oregon voters who are impacted by transit service.

Thank you for encouraging the House Transportation Committee to move HB 2745 forward, and support its passage in this session.

Respectfully,

Nikki Roemmer
Central Oregon Regional Director
Oregon League of Conservation Voters