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February 27, 2017

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

RE: Letter of Support for HB 2745—Transit Funding

Chair McKeown and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of PacificSource, 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.

PacificSource Community Solutions serves Medicaid members through the coordinated care organization in Central Oregon (via a contract with the Oregon Health Authority). As a result, PacificSource is a major funder of the transit system in Central Oregon. In partnership with the Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council (COIC), PacificSource provides Non-Emergent Medical Transportation (NEMT) benefits to over 50,000 residents of Central Oregon. PacificSource and COIC do their best to leverage funds and promote access to services, but health care NEMT dollars can only go so far; people need access to transportation to meet all of their needs and improve the health of our communities. Indeed, Central Oregon's Regional Health Improvement Plan recognizes that transportation should be a part of community strategy to address social determinants of health. For this reason, PacificSource supports HB 2745.

This 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. It's important that Central Oregon communities have the option to seek transit funding from voters.

Please encourage the House Transportation Committee to move HB 2745 forward and support its passage in this session. Thank you for empowering Central Oregon voters to exercise local control over future transit initiatives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lindsey Hopper', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Lindsey Hopper
Vice President, Medicaid Programs
Lindsey.hopper@pacificsource.com