



OPAL
Environmental Justice Oregon

opalpdx.org

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March 22, 2017

Chair, House Committee on Education
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Doherty and Members of Committee;

On behalf of OPAL Environmental Justice Oregon (OPAL), I am writing to express our strong support for HB 2693. OPAL builds power for environmental justice and civil rights in communities, specifically working alongside low-income families, people of color, immigrants, and the highest concentration of youth in the city of Portland, Oregon. We organize low-income people & people of color to achieve a safe and healthy environment where we live, work, play, and pray.

We know from our direct engagement of youth that lack of transportation options are currently a significant barrier for their overall academic success. This bill helps to address this barrier by providing flexible transportation for students in every community across the state of Oregon.

Access to transit is a lifeline for many people, in particular youth who are restricted from many transportation modes based on the virtue of their age, and can mean the difference between education, a job, safe housing, and access to services and recreation for their entire family. We believe that the goal of making transportation more efficient is not just to move people faster and farther but to offer more options and greater access to all the amenities necessary for a healthy life: jobs, education, family, and recreation.

We believe that communities across Oregon are eager and ready for equitable youth transit access. Transportation equity must look like equal access for our youth and future Oregonians.

In supporting HB 2693, we as a state have the opportunity to safely transport our students to schools, on time and ready to learn. Let's ensure we are expanding opportunities and choice for our young people and supporting their independence during a critical time in their lives.

Thank you.

Huy Ong
Executive Director
Opal Environmental Justice Oregon

**Building Power for Environmental Justice
and Civil Rights in Our Communities**