



OPAL
Environmental Justice Oregon

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April 3, 2017

House Committee on Business and Labor

Oregon State Legislature

900 Court Street NE

Salem, OR 97301

RE: HB3246

Chair Hovley, Vice Chair Barreto, Vice Chair Bynum, Members of the Committee:

OPAL builds power for environmental justice and civil rights in our communities where we live, work, learn, play and pray. We advocate for a just transportation system, inclusive housing and investment without displacement, health equity, and empowered, engaged communities who enjoy equal access to opportunity.

Representing our members, who are primarily transit riders who are unable to access other forms of mobility due to their economic status, disability, age or legal ability to attain a driver's license, we write to oppose what is currently outlined in HB3246.

We recognize that Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) are increasingly being viewed as a 'last mile' connector for transit trips, and offer services which extend beyond the bus or light rail operating hours. The names Uber and Lyft have become synonymous with the concept of a "gig economy" – where workers sign up to work on their own terms. While services such as Uber and Lyft seemingly offer a well-marketed and packaged solution for both mobility and work, advocates for transportation justice and workers' rights, both in employment law, and in local legislative bodies have started addressing key questions by striving to find progressive solutions which correctly define TNC workers as employees and improve standards and working conditions.

The gig economy should not come at the cost of the protections working people need to support themselves and their families. Policy solutions for TNC workers should be proactive, data-driven by utilizing transparent data from TNCs, and allow local governments to find a balance between the extreme profits of global corporations like Uber and the livelihoods of the people who work round the clock to earn those profits. That means giving workers the ability to have a voice in their working conditions and to receive protections from labor laws, workers' compensation, and unemployment insurance. We view HB 3246 as an example of TNCs trying to prohibit local control and regulation of their business and prevent workers from having a voice at work. By rejecting HB 3246, we have an opportunity to balance the scales of the gig economy in favor of the working people who make companies like Uber and Lyft household names.

This is a critical legislative session in which we are all committed to seeing the passage of a comprehensive transportation package that prioritizes transit services to meet increasing demand and connect communities; safe routes to school for all students; safer streets, sidewalks and crosswalks; connected bike routes; planning to reduce green house gas emissions; and greater adoption of clean electric cars and buses. Creative ways to raise the resources needed for these priorities are critical, and while a TNC tax or surcharge may help raise the needed revenue, we should not do so at the expense of a bill which does harm to workers and fails to address the larger issue of mobility needs of our communities across the state.

Thank you for your consideration, and we are looking forward to working alongside you this session as you seek ways to address issues of labor, business and community needs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Vivian Satterfield". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Vivian Satterfield

Deputy Director