



**Testimony to the Joint Transportation Preservation and Modernization Committee
on House Bill 2017**

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**Jeanette Shaw, Director, Government Relations
Forth**

Dear co-chairs McKeown and Beyer and Members of the Committee,

Forth very much appreciates the opportunity to testify. We applaud you for the incredible amount of effort you all have put into gathering input and developing a thoughtful and transparent transportation package.

Forth (formerly Drive Oregon) is a nonprofit (501c6 & 501 c3) established in 2011 to grow the electric vehicle industry, promote electric transportation and transform the way we get around in Oregon. Funding for Drive Oregon came from the Oregon Innovation Council (state lottery) and member companies. Through innovation, demonstration projects, advocacy and engagement, Forth is advancing electric, smart, shared and autonomous transportation in the Pacific Northwest and beyond. Forth is funded by grants, member companies, and the [EV Roadmap](#)—our annual conference.

Go Big

Similar to our colleagues on the Oregon Transportation Forum, we applaud your efforts to make transportation investments to reduce costs for businesses, individuals, and state and local governments. We know that when potholes and congestion rule the roads, vehicles cost more to operate, people lose precious time sitting in traffic, and goods aren't delivered on time. We also know that providing transportation options reduces household transportation costs and investing in cleaner transportation options reduces health care costs and the economic impacts of climate change.

Solutions for the Future

Electric Vehicles (EVs)

We appreciate the time the legislature has taken to examine the type of vehicles that are currently on Oregon roads. With less than 2% of the cars in Oregon currently getting better than 40mpg, you can understand our concern and disappointment that the package does not include EV rebates, creates a tiered registration fee that charges more for efficient vehicles (increasing those charges overtime), and includes a sales tax on the sale of new and used vehicles as part of its funding mechanism. This is particularly problematic for electric vehicles, which tend to cost relatively more up front due to their battery packs.

We do appreciate the fact that the package makes a nod towards electric vehicles by suggesting some additional funding for charging infrastructure. However, with last year's SB 1547, and the West Coast Electric Highway project investments, the most effective way **NOW** to advance electric vehicles is via a "cash on the hood" program as outlined in HB 2704.

Increasing the number of electric vehicles on the road, increases the money that EV drivers would spend on “fuel” which goes to power companies that employ Oregonians, pay local taxes, and have a stake in the state economy.

EVs also save drivers money due to lower maintenance costs. Although EVs are an advanced technology, they are remarkably simple to maintain because they have fewer moving parts than conventional gasoline-powered vehicles. Battery-electric EV drivers never have to worry about changing the oil, for example. EV brake pads require less periodic maintenance because drivers use them less often, thanks to regenerative braking that slows the vehicle while producing electricity. One study found that maintaining an EV can cost 60 percent less than maintaining a conventional vehicle (EPRI 2014).

By accelerating the purchase of electric vehicles, the state has the ability to meet its greenhouse gas reduction goals. We ask that you fund EV rebates and not create a tiered fee mechanism on efficient vehicles.

Strengthening Alternative Modes

The plan includes a major investment in transit service, which is a good step forward. It also includes modest investments in bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and efforts to make it safer for kids to walk and bike to school. However, the package relies on a sales tax on new bicycles, which may drive sales out of state without generating substantial revenue.

Promoting Congestion Pricing

The package includes language encouraging the use of congestion or “value” pricing, which is a critical tool for managing traffic and increasing efficiency. Attempting to fix “bottlenecks” without a pricing tool is doomed to failure. This is one of the more forward-looking elements of the package, beginning to move our transportation system into the 21st century. Unfortunately, the current package does not have any similar provisions to encourage shared, connected, and autonomous mobility.

Conclusion

Thank you for all your efforts to create a comprehensive and diversified transportation system. A multimodal transportation system will reduce transportation costs and provide increased access to the many locations Oregonians go daily. We respectfully request the inclusion of an EV rebate in the package via HB 2704 and the removal of the tiered electric vehicle registration fees, and the excise tax on new and used electric vehicles.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify and we look forward to continuing to work with the Committee and its efforts to create a comprehensive transportation package.