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TO: Co-Chairs Beyer and McKeown
Co-Vice Chairs Boquist and Bentz
Members of the Joint Committee on Transportation Preservation and Modernization

FR: Graham Trainor, Chief of Staff
Oregon AFL-CIO

RE: *Oregon AFL-CIO Support for Bold Transportation Package, HB 2017 (with -3)*

June 6, 2017

My name is Graham Trainor and I'm the Chief of Staff of the Oregon AFL-CIO, the statewide federation of labor unions representing over 300,000 working women and men in every corner of the state and a voice for all workers in the legislative process. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bold, visionary, statewide approach to funding our transportation system that you all have put so much time and energy into over the course of the last few years.

The State Federation of Labor has been the long-term advocate for an economy that works for all Oregonians and a believer in the notion that a well-maintained, well-funded, robust transportation system is an important underpinning to a healthy economy. Unfortunately, as you are all keenly aware of, this is certainly not the case in Oregon today.

As a worker advocate, we aim to channel the lens of a working Oregonian in all of our policy work. One of the things I can tell you is that today's transportation reality in Oregon is having a dramatic effect on the lives of working people. From spending more and more time commuting and less time with their families, to adjusting their schedules to show up to work at 6am so that they can travel when there is less traffic and congestion, to spending more money on maintenance of their cars due to the beatings they take on our roads, our current system is taking its toll on working families.

With 439 structurally deficient bridges and 718 bridges on the state highway system needing to be replaced, retrofitted, or rehabilitated for seismic resilience, as just one of the many needs identified in the Governor's Transportation Vision Panel, we have a lot of catching up to do. In addition to the long-term work many of you have been undertaking, we have also been advocating for the need for this Legislature to "go big" on a major transportation package and we believe that this proposal truly can help our state begin to move the dial with congestion relief, maintenance and preservation, transit and multimodal investments.

With nearly 350,000 transportation related or dependent jobs in Oregon, this funding package is critical to working families and is necessary in order to ensure a good quality of life and a stronger foundation for our state's economy looking to the future.

One issue of concern to us is the worker-only paid payroll tax to fund transit. While we are very much in support of transit investments as a way to create jobs and give Oregonians more transportation options, we would like to see this portion of the package be equally shared by employers as well. Additionally, we expect that serious efforts be made to do more for low-income workers and transit users as it relates to low-income fares and other mitigation efforts to ease the burden of this package on the lowest-wage workers in our state.

In conclusion, this transportation funding package presents this Legislature with a great opportunity. It presents an opportunity to create jobs, ease the congestion that is keeping workers on the road and away from their families, boost our economy, provide more options for commuters and be responsive to what this committee heard from Oregonians in all corners of the state during your interim tour. Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in in support of this bold transportation package and we look forward to working with you all to ensure its passage.