



June 7, 2017

Senator Lee Beyer, Co-Chair
Representative Caddy McKeown, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Transportation Preservation and Modernization

Co-Chairs and Members of the Committee:

The Portland Business Alliance represents more than 1,800 small, medium, and large businesses in the Portland-metro region. We would like to thank you for the transportation infrastructure plan you have crafted for the State of Oregon. Our region and state are uniquely trade dependent. It is critical to our economy and our quality of life that we adequately invest in improvements that ensure an efficient, reliable and safe transportation system.

As you heard around the state during your interim tour, congestion in the Portland region is negatively affecting the state's economy by reducing our competitiveness, resulting in significant impacts on employment and economic output. The congestion mitigation projects you have prioritized for the Metro region will help alleviate the bottlenecks that hamper our economic growth, improving freight mobility, returning hours of time to Oregonians, and enabling our regional and state economy to grow.

Transportation and the ability to move goods have been a priorities for the Alliance for many years; we appreciate the state's commitment to partner with us to accomplish these projects. The Alliance is committed to working with governments in the Portland-metro region and the proposed Metro Congestion Relief District on moving forward with the identified priority projects.

We also recognize the importance of transit and transportation choices. Portland businesses have invested heavily in supporting TriMet, providing 60 percent of their operating revenue through an employer-paid payroll tax. We are concerned about the impact of the proposed employee-paid payroll tax, as our region is seeing the cumulative impact of taxes and fees continuing to grow and impact affordability. At the very least, we would like to see the percentage of operating funds increased from 85 to 90 percent. We look forward to continuing to work with you on this element of the package.

We need to invest in the transportation system in order to retain our quality of life and economic competitiveness. A 2014 report, *The Economic Impacts of Congestion*, found that additional investments could generate 8,300 jobs, \$1.1 billion in benefits, and a \$2.40 return for every \$1 of investment, by 2040. Working cooperatively and combing multiple funding sources to accomplish our goals makes sense. Thank you for prioritizing this effort over the last year.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sandra McDonough
President & CEO