



Testimony to the Joint Committee on Transportation Preservation and Modernization on HB 2017-3

June 7, 2017

Co-chairs Beyer and McKeown and members of the Joint Committee on Transportation Preservation and Modernization,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Kelly Campbell, and I am the Executive Director of Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility. We represent more than 2000 health professionals and public health advocates throughout the state who are committed to tackling the greatest threats to human health and survival, one of which is climate change. As transportation accounts for 37% of Oregon's greenhouse gas emissions, it is essential that a smart and modern transportation bill works to create a healthy and equitable climate future for Oregon.

Investing in public transit, walking and bicycling has many well-documented benefits for our health and benefits to the environment by reducing pollution associated with driving. The savings in associated health costs will strengthen our state's economy.

In contrast, continuing to invest in an auto-centric, fossil-fuel based transportation system brings more air pollution and climate disruption. It contributes to serious health conditions such as asthma, obesity, and heart attacks along with injuries and death from auto accidents. These health issues affect all Oregonians, but most particularly children, the elderly, low-income communities, and communities of color.

We strongly support incorporation of the Transportation for Oregon's Future Coalition principles into the transportation bill.

We appreciate the hard work that the committee has already done to incorporate many of these concepts into the bill. We recommend the following changes:

- Address the regressive employee payroll tax funding mechanism for public transit. If this cannot be removed entirely, require transit agencies to demonstrate up front how they will use the funding to mitigate impacts on low-income transit riders.
- Follow the recommendations of The Street Trust on improvement of Safe Routes to Schools, especially prioritization of Title 1 schools.

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- Remove the excise tax on bicycles and the tiered registration fee system that penalizes buyers of low emission cars. We should be incentivizing bicycle ridership and low emission vehicles, as these are part of the transportation solution.

Speaking personally, I am aware of the privilege I have by being able to afford to live in close-in Portland. This allows me to commute easily and safely by bicycle or bus to my job, as well as to safely bicycle with my child to elementary school a mile away primarily using bike route designated streets. The ability to safely and conveniently bike, walk and use transit should not be a function of economic class. With this bill, you have the ability to address historic transportation inequities by prioritizing funding for low-income communities to ensure that all families in Oregon have access to safe, healthy and affordable transportation options.



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