



*Everywhere
Central Oregon
Works*

June 7, 2017

Joint Committee on Transportation Preservation and Modernization
Representative Caddy McKeown, Co-Chair
Senator Lee Beyer, Co-Chair
900 Court Street NE, Room 431
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: Transportation Package

Chair McKeown, Chair Beyer and Members of the Committee:

Cascades East Transit (CET) provided nearly 700,000 rides and 51,600 service hours in fiscal year 2015 - 2016 across Crook, Deschutes, and Jefferson Counties and The Confederated Tribe of Warm Springs. CET service spans nearly 100 miles north to south and 50 miles west to east covering a small urbanized area and several rural communities with no dedicated transit funding stream.

- Bend
- Culver
- La Pine
- Madras
- Metolius
- Prineville
- Redmond
- Sisters
- Warm Springs

As a relatively new transit system, we have worked closely with the cities and counties of Central Oregon to develop the best service possible with the limited resources available. Despite scarce funding, CET has been able to continue to leverage resources to provide service but not in a way that allows strategic planning for the future.

The modest growth of the transit system lags behind the population growth and compounded transportation needs of the Central Oregon region.

Section 122 of the transportation package would provide immense support for CET and particularly to Central Oregon's rural communities who lack match funding for federal grants. CET recently participated in a study of potential benefits of a transportation package on transit systems called Better Transit, so we know the direct benefits CET would experience should the transportation package be passed. With increased transit funding, 120% more residents could be served by frequent transit, service could expand by 83%, and 44% more affordable homes could be served by transit.

Increased transit service is critical to help seniors, people with disabilities, and transit dependent populations experience quality life in our community, especially access to medical services. Robust transit service is also critical for connecting riders to jobs and school, and especially in a recreation and tourism community with many service jobs. 77% of current intercity trips on CET are traveling to work or school.

Because Central Oregon's population is expected to grow 34% by 2035, public transit will play an integral role in moving people throughout our region. Increased funding to CET benefits the economic future of Central Oregon. Transit funding will positively affect Central Oregonians for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Karen Friend
Executive Director