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Date: March 10, 2022

From: Better Eugene-Springfield Transportation

To: Oregon Transportation Commission

Re: Allocation of Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act funding

Good morning, Chair Van Brocklin and Commissioners.

For the past 10 years, I have been the executive director of Better Eugene-Springfield Transportation, or BEST for short. We are a broad coalition of community leaders of all stripes, building a successful community by bringing people together to promote transportation options, safe streets, and walkable neighborhoods.

For the past 7 years, I have also been a member of the Lane Area Commission on Transportation.

At the LaneACT meeting last night, Travis Brouwer gave an excellent presentation on allocating funding from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. He underscored that Oregon has a gap in funding to operate, fix, and enhance our state highways. A gap of billions of dollars.

Fortunately, Oregon has options to address that gap. For example, we can raise gas taxes. Indeed, during a legislative listening session leading up to House Bill 2017, Lane County Commissioner Jay Bozievich, who is one of our more conservative officials, suggested raising the gas tax by 25 cents a gallon to have sufficient funds for highways and other roads.

But that is not the discussion we are having today. The discretionary portion of Oregon's share of IIJA funding is a historic opportunity to fund needs that otherwise would be difficult to fund.

Under the Oregon Constitution, gas taxes and other taxes and fees on motor vehicles cannot be used for off-road needs, for example, off-street paths for people to walk or bicycle safely, and investments in better transit.

I urge you to allocate the bulk of discretionary IIJA funding to needs that cannot be funded from the State Highway Fund. I urge you to support Scenario 2B.

Thank you.

For BEST,

Rob Zako, Executive Director

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Building a successful community by bringing people together to promote transportation options, safe streets, and walkable neighborhoods.

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