



August 30, 2021

The Honorable Ron Wyden
United States Senate
221 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Earl Blumenauer
U.S. House of Representatives
1111 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
United States Senate
531 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
U.S. House of Representatives
2134 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Suzanne Bonamici
U.S. House of Representatives
2231 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kurt Schrader
U.S. House of Representatives
2431 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Cliff Bentz
U.S. House of Representatives
1239 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC. 20515

Honorable Members of the Oregon State Congressional Delegation:

We write to strongly urge your support for high-speed rail as a core investment in any federal infrastructure package. The economic and social benefits of high-speed rail have proven themselves in thirty-two nations across the globe. In the Pacific Northwest, an overwhelming majority supports an investment in high-speed rail.¹ Federal support will lay the path for the Cascadia Ultra-High-Speed Ground Transportation project,² a transformative infrastructure project which is a key element of the Cascadia Innovation Corridor³ initiative. This initiative was borne from and supported by multi-stakeholder engagement from the private sector and government as a climate, economic and equity priority for the Pacific Northwest.

Climate change is a critical concern for stakeholders throughout the region. We are currently witnessing the impact of rising emissions including record breaking heat waves, wildfires and permanent damage to our natural ecosystems. Smoke from the Bootleg Fire has reached as far as Washington, D.C., and the Oregon towns of Detroit, Phoenix and Talent are still recovering from the devastating impacts of the 2020 fires. Now is the time for bold action. If left unchecked, climate change will continue to have devastating impacts on the environment, transportation infrastructure networks, and the economy.

¹ Fast Forward Cascadia:

<https://secureservercdn.net/198.71.233.213/xh9.3f1.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/220-6138-NW-High-Speed-Rail-Survey-Memo-Results-Regionwide.pdf>

² <https://wsdot.wa.gov/planning/studies/ultra-high-speed-travel/ground-transportation-study>

³ <https://connectcascadia.com/>

High-speed rail offers climate action at the scale we need to make a real difference. It is the only viable transportation solution capable of simultaneously reducing carbon, congestion, costs, accidents, and energy consumption. Train travel is significantly more efficient than either air or automobile, even before factoring in fully electric high-speed rail. In the Pacific Northwest, high-speed rail would replace 27 million carbon-intensive flight miles and 6.1 billion vehicle miles traveled on our roads over a 40-year period.

Launched in 2016, the Cascadia initiative creates a vision for the region stretching from Oregon, through Washington State to British Columbia. A major component of the initiative is development of ultra-high-speed ground transportation through the corridor. The project's important goal is to create better connections that will catalyze innovation, shared prosperity, and job growth and allow the region to address and combat climate change and rising carbon emissions as the region experiences severe traffic congestion amid population increases.

Growth projections for the region are startling, with populations expected to increase by more than 30% —or 3-4 million additional people — by 2050. Without additional strategies to accommodate this unprecedented growth, the current challenges in managing traffic congestion and the resulting carbon emissions will get worse. Greenhouse gas emissions contribute to the acceleration of climate change; in Oregon, greenhouse gases from transportation make up 40% of all greenhouse gas emissions in the state⁴. A highly functional and reliable regional high-speed rail transportation system will significantly reduce fuel consumption and gas emissions by reducing the number of vehicles on the road and cutting down on the number of SOV miles traveled⁵, which is all crucial for our rapidly growing region.

The mega-region needs to move quickly to embrace big, transformative ideas that will prepare it for the continued growth to come and sustainably preserve the region for future generations. Recently, the Cascadia Innovation Corridor released the “Cascadia Vision 2050” report⁶, calling for better connections between the region's urban centers and creation of “hub cities” to accommodate our growing populations. High-speed rail is the key to linking these communities and job centers.

For the past five years, a broad group of stakeholders has been working to advance the vision of building ultra-high-speed ground transportation to connect the anchor cities in the region—Vancouver, BC; Seattle, WA; and Portland, OR. With support from the State of Oregon, Washington State, the Province of British Columbia, and the private sector, the Washington Department of Transportation commissioned reports studying the feasibility and economics of the project. The initial feasibility study⁷ showed robust ridership, revenue projections, an estimated \$355 billion in economic growth and 200,000 new jobs related to construction and ongoing operation. The “business case analysis”⁸ demonstrated that the project is economically viable. The most recent report⁹, completed in late 2020, outlines a framework for governance, coordination with key stakeholder audiences (e.g., environmental agencies, tribes, etc.) and

⁴ <https://www.oregon.gov/odot/Programs/Pages/Climate-Action-Plan.aspx>

⁵ <https://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/RPTD/RPTD%20Document%20Library/High-Speed-Rail-Report.pdf>

⁶ https://connectcascadia.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Cascadia-Vision-2050_Published.pdf

⁷ https://wsdot.wa.gov/publications/fulltext/LegReports/17-19/UltraHighSpeedGroundTransportation_FINAL.pdf

⁸ <https://wsdot.wa.gov/planning/studies/ultra-high-speed-travel/2019-business-case-analysis>

⁹ Executive Summary:

<https://wsdot.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2017/08/28/CascadiaUHSgt-FrameworkForFuture-ExecutiveSummary.pdf>
and Full Report:

<https://wsdot.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2017/08/28/CascadiaUHSgt-FrameworkForFuture-FinalReport.pdf>

potential funding paths for the project. Now it is time to take the next step—federal recognition and funding for this critical project. Other regions of the country are developing high-speed rail corridors. Projects are underway in Florida, Texas and California. The Northeast states are working together on a plan for their region. This region has taken the critical first steps, but federal support is needed to advance this project.

Investment in high-speed rail will unleash the full potential of this region's businesses and other innovators, strategically address the concerns around growth and environmental impacts, and improve the quality of life for the region's residents. This project represents a bold and innovative solution to address climate change, robust mobility, equitable access to opportunity, good jobs, and a safe, sustainable environment.

Accordingly, we request that you support a robust investment in high-speed rail as part of a federal infrastructure package.

Thank you for your consideration,

Winta Johannes
Executive Director
Albina Vision

Jerry Boles
President
Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen

Paige Mallot
Chair
Cascadia Rail

Marcus Mundy
Executive Director
Coalition of Communities of Color

Simon Date
President & CEO
Corvallis Chamber of Commerce

Brittany Quick-Warner
President & CEO
Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce

HDR

Jacobs

Fred Simpson
President
Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employe

Ashley Henry
Executive Director
Business for a Better Portland

Meredith Connolly
Oregon Director
Climate Solutions

Corky Collier
Executive Director
Columbia Corridor Association

Mayor Lucy Vinis
Mayor of Eugene

Travis Stovall
Mayor of Gresham

HNTB

Lynn Peterson
Council President
Metro Regional Government

Shirley Craddick
Councilor
Metro Regional Government

Christine Lewis
Councilor
Metro Regional Government

Bob Stacey
Councilor
Metro Regional Government

Lori Stegman
Multnomah County Commissioner

Val Hoyle
Oregon Commissioner of Labor

Angus Duncan
Retired Chair
Oregon Global Warming Commission

Lee Beyer
Oregon State Senator

Nancy Nathanson
Oregon State Representative

Lisa Reynolds
Oregon State Representative

Jo Ann Hardesty
Portland City Commissioner

Dan Ryan
Portland City Commissioner

Andrew Hoen
President & CEO
Portland Business Alliance

Peter Tuschinski
Head of Rail Electrification North-America
Siemens Mobility

Juan Gonzales
Councilor
Metro Regional Government

Mary Nolan
Councilor
Metro Regional Government

Deborah Kafoury
Multnomah County Chair

Tim Miller
Director
Oregon Business for Climate

Diana Nunez
Executive Director
Oregon Environmental Council

Doug Moore
Executive Director
Oregon League of Conservation Voters

Wlmsvey Campos
Oregon State Representative

Karin Power
Oregon State Representative

Ted Wheeler
Mayor of Portland

Mingus Mapps
Portland City Commissioner

Carmen Rubio
Portland City Commissioner

Brad Reed
Campaign Manager
Renew Oregon

Shamir Karkal
CEO
Sila Money

Sarah Iannarone
Executive Director
The Street Trust - Greater Portland

Skip Newberry
President & CEO
Technology Association of Oregon

Lakayana Drury
Founder & Executive Director
Word is Bond

Doug Kelsey
Former General Manager
TriMet

Keith Wilson
TITAN Freight Systems
Advisory Board
US High Speed Rail Association

Ray Lahood
Former Secretary of Transportation & Co-Chair
US High Speed Rail Coalition

Sunrise PDX

Frank Angelo
Transportation Committee Chair
Westside Economic Alliance

Sam Desue, Jr.
General Manager
TriMet

WSP

Andy Kunz
President
US High Speed Rail Association





SIEMENS

