

Subject: Open Letter on Transportation — Invitation to Cosign

Hello (Family, Friend, Neighbor),

The objective of the Open Letter on Transportation, (please read it, below), is to coalesce political support and funding for four relatively easy, low cost, high impact transportation solutions.

To overcome the political status quo that has created the transportation problems at hand, we'll need hundreds of thousands of cosigners from Oregon.

Will you please cosign, and recruit additional people to cosign?

Best Regards,

Robinson Foster, Western Affairs

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##

Yellow Highlight = Work Note

Subject: Open Letter on Transportation

The following Open Letter on Transportation is addressed to elected officials in Oregon responsible for transportation.

To date, registered voters in the following states and provinces have cosigned this letter, or a letter detailing factors pertinent to their state or provincial jurisdiction:

- Oregon x,xxx,xxx (Robinson Foster to coordinate)
- Washington State x,xxx,xxx (Lael & Tom White, CRA, Solutionary Rail coordinate?)
- British Columbia x,xxx,xxx (Who to coordinate?)
- California x,xxx,xxx (Brian Yannity, RailPAC coordinate?)
- Virginia x,xxx,xxx (Michael Testerman, Virginia Rail Policy Institute coordinate?)
- (Need coordinators to get cosigners in additional US states, Canadian provinces, and Mexican states.)
- (Signature data needs to be online.)
- Total to date xx,xxx,xxx signatures.

In the Portland Metro, voters roundly rejected [Metro Measure 26-218](#) in the 2020 Election because simply extending light rail and making street improvements will not make transportation better. There are individual pieces of the measure that are valuable, but the measure misses the point, and the time isn't right for some of the line items at all. [ODOT's planned tolls on I-5 and I-205](#) are widely unpopular because they will not make transportation better. More highways generate more traffic. More of the same does not create change. When you're digging yourself into a hole, Stop! Travel and shipping options are needed to decongest highways.

We need to first do better with what we have. For the privilege of saying no to these bad transportation projects, we have a responsibility to educate about, and advocate for the following four relatively easy, low cost, high impact, intermodal transportation solutions that will be popular because they will reduce the pressure on our street and highway infrastructure:

Rebuild the railroads we have:

- **Operate a demonstration rolling truck stop freight train for commercial vehicles of all types to bypass I-5 and I-205 in Oregon and Washington:**
 - A rolling truck stop freight train bypasses urban, suburban, and rural topography.
 - It will decongest I-5 and I-205 of 100% of the commercial vehicles that simply travel through the Portland-Vancouver Metro without stopping.
 - It will cross finance Amtrak Cascades passenger service, and other short distance freight services that the private railroads do not compete for.

- Watch [RAlpin - Breeze Through the Swiss Alps](#).
- Approve the [RAIL Solution rolling truck stop research grant application to the Oregon Department of Transportation](#).
- **Implement fast, frequent passenger service between Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia:**
 - Combine the [Oregon Passenger Rail Plan](#) and the [Washington State Long-Range Plan for Amtrak Cascades](#) to implement higher speeds and greater frequencies.
 - Leverage Amtrak Cascades with complementary transit-rideshare-urban freight services, discussed below.
 - Move all Portland bus operations into the closed bus station next door and connect it by safe, all weather connection to Union Station.
 - Immediate improvement of Amtrak Cascades service to expand its market share is in sharp contrast to proposed high-speed rail, which will take decades to implement.
 - Identify US Postal Service and other high value urban freight to ship in Amtrak Cascades service and cross finance its passenger service.

Redesign transit, rideshare, and urban freight:

- A significant number of people use Uber + Lyft to fill the many gaps, (both geographic and time of day), in transit. Why shouldn't we learn more about redesigning TriMet and rideshare services with the following characteristics?
 - Serve 100% of the urban + suburban population, on a door-to-door basis, 24/7/365, with timely, reliable, safe service.
 - Not everyone likes to drive, or can. Attract 50% or more of single occupant vehicle traffic to transit-rideshare.
 - Save the much greater cost of owning + operating a car, paying taxis, Uber, or Lyft rides.
 - Cross finance lower income people using transit-rideshare.
- Urban freight ranges from package to to truckload size vehicles.
 - 50% or more of urban freight may be removed from general traffic to be towed by express transit vehicles, cross financing passenger transit.
 - At express stops, dedicated urban freight drivers cover first and last miles.
 - Read [21 Key Takeaways from Partnerships between Transit & Transportation Networking Companies](#).
 - Watch [How On Demand Transit can co-exist with Fixed Routes](#).
 - Read [Urban freight movement by rail](#)
- Demonstrate transit-rideshare-urban freight services.

Rebuild the BNSF Railway and Interstate Columbia River bridges we have:

- Plus other recommendations detailed in [A Common Sense Alternative to the Columbia River Crossing](#), (watch the video):
 - Add a drawbridge segment to the existing railroad bridge, the absence of which precipitates 95% of the I-5 Interstate Bridge lifts.
 - Seismic retrofit the existing I-5 Interstate Bridge.

Use the Willamette River:

- Rebuild the Willamette Falls Locks for freight, passenger ferries, and recreation:
 - Read the [Economic Benefits of Reopening the Willamette Falls Locks](#).
 - With the locks working again, significant volumes of freight, (e.g., agricultural, gravel and rock, ocean containers), will divert off the highways. It's slower but the commodities diverted do not need speed, and the barges generate key revenue to pay for the locks and cross finance [Frog Ferry](#) passenger service, and recreational use.

These relatively easy, low cost, high impact solutions will:

- Make better use of what we have, at less cost, with higher impact.
- Attract travel and shipping to new highway competitive services.
- Reduce travel and shipping cost, highway congestion, accident rates, pollution, inequity.
- Create badly needed redundancies and substitute services to operate 24/7/365 in all weather conditions.
- Create production, construction, operations, and maintenance jobs, and leverage economic development.

And satisfy politically tough criteria to be:

- Bi-partisan, in a bitter political period, driven by economic distress in which the two major parties need to work together.
- Non-discriminatory, serve 100% of urban, suburban, and rural travel and shipping.
- Generate revenue in excess of capital, maintenance, and operating cost to fund a regional transportation trust fund.

In short, our solutions are a model approach for not only for Oregon and the Pacific Northwest, but for the nation, Canada, and Mexico, too.

A political consensus is needed to plan, demonstrate, construct, and operate each of these solutions. In Oregon, funds may come from the city, county, Metro, state, federal, (including the upcoming infrastructure bill in Congress), and public-private partnerships, too.

Time is of the essence. We need to both stimulate the economic rebound from the pandemic, and be ready for it, too. Climate chaos is increasingly dangerous to life and the economy. Increasing numbers of highway injuries and deaths, highway pollution, and highway pavement and bridge costs are unsustainable, unaffordable, and inequitable.

Will you please cosign this letter and work to build political consensus and funding for these four relatively easy, low cost, high impact transportation solutions?

Your work on our proposal will be on our minds when we prepare to vote in Special Elections in 2021 and 2022, and in the November 2022 General Elections.

Best Regards,

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Cosigners:

(Name, City)