

Chair Van Brocklin & Commissioners -

Hello, and thank you for the opportunity to testify during the OTC's consideration of the use of Oregon's transportation funding from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). Today the CLMPO wishes to reaffirm the MPO's commitment to funding the Non-Highway category as the number one priority and encourages OTC to use the new flexible funds for multimodal projects that provide multiple benefits.

Early in 2021 the CLMPO was pleased to see the OTC's historic funding investment in the Non-Highway category, helping Oregon realize significant improvements in mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and advancing social equity, safety, and multimodal mobility. That was only the first step in what needs to be continued investments in this area. Investments in Non-Highway (public and active transportation) are some of the most effective investments to address climate change and improve equity outcomes. In this funding category, to provide just two examples, both the Safe Routes to Schools and Community Paths programs are heavily over-subscribed and provide two of the state's best opportunities to direct much needed funding to communities that otherwise struggle to, or simply can't, fund these activities and projects.

During the development of the 2024-2027 STIP, funding for the Non-Highway category was reduced from the initial scenario (Scenario 2) presented by ODOT staff. Scenario 2 included \$321 million for non-highway investments which was reduced by \$66 million for the final adopted scenario. CLMPO requests that you direct *at least* \$66 million in IIJA flexible funding to the Non-Highway program, restoring the original funding scenario presented to the OTC when building the 2024-2027 STIP. This additional funding can make a significant impact in improving outcomes in communities around the state.

With the flexibility provided with a significant portion of the IIJA funding, the CLMPO asks that you incentivize projects with multiple co-benefits by allocating bonus points to projects that leverage multiple STIP categories and support multiple OTC Strategic Action Plan goals. Currently, transportation projects often need to cobble together funding from several sources in order to fund all aspects of a project, particularly in the case of multimodal projects, where funding for roadway, pedestrian and bicycle, transit, safety, and other aspects must all come together to fully achieve the desired outcomes. In particular, within CLMPO, we have found it challenging to move forward large, catalytic multimodal projects such as the Main Street corridor in Springfield, future phases of EmX bus rapid transit in Eugene, future phases of Franklin Boulevard in both cities and the River Road/Santa Clara bicycle and pedestrian bridge over Beltline in Eugene. With the IIJA funding, the OTC has the opportunity to fund catalytic projects that are challenging to fund through ODOT's siloed grant programs. In particular, the ped/bike bridge over Beltline will provide a safe route to school for hundreds of high school students who currently must walk or bike through a busy highway interchange on their way to school. The project could cost around \$12 million, which doesn't match up well with existing grant programs.

The overall outcomes in funding the 2024-2027 STIP shifted as the OTC considered various scenarios. One goal of the OTC, as stated in early meetings during that process, was to "eliminate the red" in the outcome analysis . . . but that is essentially the peanut butter approach, and does little to make truly significant, or "Notable," improvements in any of the outcomes. The CLMPO asks the OTC to take bold action to make *Notable Improvements* in Non-Highway funding outcomes and to prioritize at least \$300 million of flex funds for large, catalytic multimodal projects. We urge OTC to be bold and act to complete a safe bike-ped network for Oregon in less than 50 years to achieve active transportation, equity, safety, health, and climate goals.

Thank you for your time.