



Testimony in Favor of HB 2338 – Creates Task Force to Study Extension of Westside Express Service Commuter Line from Wilsonville to Salem

For Public Hearing Scheduled on March 18, 2013

To Chair Read, Vice-Chairs Bentz and Gorsek, and members of the House Committee on Transportation and Economic Development:

The City of Wilsonville supports House Bill 2338, which creates a task force to study extension of the Westside Express Service (WES) commuter line from Wilsonville to Salem.

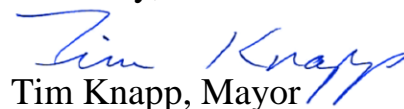
As a major industrial employment hub for the South Portland metro region and North Willamette Valley and the operator of South Metro Area Regional Transit (SMART), the City of Wilsonville is very familiar with the operations of WES and providing public transit services along the I-5 corridor between Salem and Portland-area communities. Every weekday, over 15,000 workers commute primarily from Portland, Beaverton, Tualatin, Tigard and Salem to jobs in Wilsonville.

Ridership on SMART buses and WES commuter rail has grown significantly over the past year, reaching double-digit rates of increase month-over-month on an annual basis. Today, SMART's ridership totals over 360,000 per year, with a significant portion of riders commuting to/from Salem via WES commuter rail and SMART or Salem-Keizer Area Transit express buses.

Vigorous public-transit services help provide employers with the ability to recruit and retain the best workforce no matter where employees may live, which has the effect of making our employers more competitive and our jobs more secure in the global economy. Public transit helps to maintain limited freeway capacity for the movement of freight and conduct of commerce by removing single-occupancy vehicles from I-5 and other key arterials.

The City of Wilsonville urges a DO-PASS vote by the House Committee on Transportation and Economic Development on HB 2338.

Sincerely,


Tim Knapp, Mayor