



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 2422

Submitted by Chris Flammang, Member
Governor's Commission on Senior Services
February 28, 2007

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Chair Beyer and Members of the Committee:

My name is Chris Flammang, and I am a resident of Coos County. I am submitting this written support for HB 2422, a bill to increase the tobacco tax share for the funding of transportation services to seniors and persons with disabilities from the current 2 cents per pack to 6 cents per pack. I am doing so as a member of the Governor's Commission on Senior Services, which is in support of this bill.

The Governor's Commission on Seniors Services is committed to helping Oregon leaders plan now and invest now for our future. The Governor's Commission held a statewide series of community forums last year, to meet with Oregonians about the future challenges we face as our population continues to age. We spoke with more than 500 Oregonians in 20 cities, and heard that transportation was a major issue throughout the state. This was especially true in the rural areas, but was also a high priority among respondents from more populated communities.

As you may know, the senior population is the fastest growing segment of the population in this state. By the year 2025, nearly one in five Oregonians will be over the age of 65. This bill, by providing an additional \$52 million in revenue to support senior and disabled transportation, is an important tool to help plan for a future where citizens are healthy, vital and independent.

In addition to serving on the Senior Services Commission, I am the current chair of the Coos County Area Transit (CCAT) advisory board. We operate the Dial-a-Ride program under the Older Americans Act, as well as a local loop bus system, and a limited intercity service. Our system connects with the Curry County coastal express, providing the only public transit between Coos Bay and Brookings. Our transit program is a non-taxing service district.

The tobacco tax funds are a direct service to seniors and persons with disabilities in our area. The funds are crucial as a means of assisting these population groups with options that provide for their personal independence and quality of life. I have seen first-hand the difference these moneys make to the independence of seniors and people with disabilities in the local area.

I respectfully urge you to ensure that HB 2422 is enacted.

Thank you for your consideration.