

# MERKLEY, WYDEN, WALDEN AND SCHRADER ANNOUNCE MAJOR TRANSPORTATION GRANTS FOR OREGON CITIES

Thursday, April 5, 2018

PORTLAND, OR — Oregon's U.S. Senators Jeff Merkley, who serves on the Senate Appropriations Committee, and Ron Wyden, along with Congressmen Greg Walden (OR-2) and Kurt Schrader (OR-5), today announced more than \$6.5 million in grant funding for public transit agencies in Oregon.

“I joined the Appropriations Committee in 2013 so that Oregon would have a strong voice in decisions about the investments our nation should be making, including improving public transportation across Oregon,” Merkley said. “Many working men and women rely on public transportation to get to their jobs, and when buses break down or can't run, it puts their livelihoods at risk. Investing in infrastructure doesn't just put people to work now, it helps people get to work for years to come, which is why infrastructure investments should be a top national priority.”

“Keeping our buses up and running keeps Oregon up and running,” Wyden said. “This investment in public transportation will ensure Oregonians in Salem and throughout the Rogue Valley can get around safely and reliably to the many places they need to go – to work, to school and everywhere in between. I'm proud to have worked with my colleagues to secure this funding for these much-needed upgrades to our bus systems.”

“Transportation needs remain a key issue in the Rogue Valley,” said Walden. “This Department of Transportation grant that will help secure new regional buses will ensure the people in the Rogue Valley will have more timely options to commute to work, visit family and friends, and connect to transportation hubs throughout the region. I am proud to have worked alongside my Oregon colleagues, as well as Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao, to help meet a real public transportation need in our local community.”

the community,” said Schrader. “Good, safe public transit is a foundational economic and cultural backbone for any

community. Improvements to our transit in Salem-Keizer will create greater access to local businesses and culture, increasing commerce and the arts throughout the community. Better transit also means fewer cars on the road which will alleviate congestion and decrease the amount of carbon emissions we produce. I've been a big booster for Salem-Keizer Transit here in DC and have continuously advocated for their applications for federal funding. This announcement is a great federal investment in our state capital and I'm proud of the work that Salem-Keizer Transit does for the entire Salem-Keizer community.”

The U.S. Department of Transportation awards transit improvement grants through a competitive process. Merkley and Wyden in March announced that the program received \$9.73 billion in the 2018 spending bill, including \$1.147 billion for Bus and Bus Facilities Grants to help transit agencies purchase new buses and replace aging fleets.

The Rogue Valley Transportation District was awarded a more than \$3 million grant to purchase 35-foot buses that run on compressed natural gas, as well as a more than \$1 million grant to purchase and install signal prioritization technology on its bus fleet and at highway interchanges.

The Salem Area Mass Transit District was awarded a nearly \$2.5 million Bus and Bus Facilities Grants to purchase new buses, which will run on compressed natural gas.

“This funding will help ensure we meet our community's evolving needs for mobility and connectivity,” said Robert Krebs, president of the Salem Area Mass Transit District's Board of Directors. “But this represents more than the purchase of new buses; this is about continuing to grow a robust public transit system to better serve the greater Salem-Keizer community.”