

# ...Fare hikes, layoffs, and service cuts slow public transit

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 quency on 13 major bus lines. It will mean an additional two to five minutes between buses at rush hour. Mid-day, buses that ran every 15 minutes now run every 20, while buses that ran every

20 minutes now run every 30. Fares account for only a quarter of Tri-Met's revenue. But they're going up, five cents. At the June 11 rally, that brought a reaction from Shannon Olive, lead bus organizer for the Transit

Justice and Health Campaign at OPAL Environmental Justice Oregon. "Stop the fare increase. Stop the service cuts," Olive said. "Give us what we need: more buses." Rosenberg, the ATU legislative director, is hopeful Congress will move to relax the restrictions on spending federal funds.

HR 2746 in the House has 131 co-sponsors (including Portland-area Democrats Earl Blumenauer and David Wu). The bill would give urban districts the flexibility to spend some federal matching funds on operations and maintenance. A companion bill in the Senate, S 3189, is co-sponsored by Ron Wyden (D-Ore.)

At the Portland rally, a long line of politicians spoke in support of transit funding, including Democratic gubernatorial candidate John Kitzhaber; Metro president candidates Tom Hughes and Bob Stacey; representatives from Congressmen David Wu and



Kurt Schrader's offices; and state senators Betsy Johnson and Richard Devlin. While the union's short-term agenda is stopping cuts, its longer-term agenda is for the nation to make major investments in mass transit. "People need public transportation for life-sustaining activities, like doctor visits, child care, shopping, socializing, and independence," said Jon Hunt, president of Portland-headquartered ATU Local 757. "Employees need to

get to work so they can feed themselves and their families .... As public transportation shrinks and becomes more costly, more and more vehicles are put on the road, bringing pollution, traffic jams, and wear and tear on our streets." "You're not going find a greener job than a bus driver," says Rosenberg. "These are solid jobs that you can't contract out overseas. And the environmental impacts of mass transit are significant."



**In the photo left, Ray Mason of ATU Local 587 in Seattle participated in the "Save Our Ride" rally in Portland, as did new TriMet General Manager Neil McFarlane (photo above right), who is surrounded by a sea of Amalgamated Transit Union banners.**

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