

July 17, 2024

Co-Chairs McLain and Gorsek and members of the Committee,

ODOT needs to prioritize maintenance, safety and emissions reduction to create a model transportation system featuring multimodal transit and freight, walkable communities and robust active transportation infrastructure.

Priority list:

- Fix it first
- Safety measures
- Invest in public transit (high-frequency, reliability Improvements)
- Incentivize transportation electrification, including rebates for electric vehicle purchases for low-income people
- Rail investment
- Safe Routes to School
- Seismic retrofits for 700 vulnerable bridges
- More funding for local/county transportation
- No highway widening

Oregon's Transportation system is our state's leading cause of carbon pollution (40%). We must shift from a system that prioritizes private-car use to prioritizing mass transit (intracity and intercity) and active transportation. The Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) needs to be expanded to support this, with additional funding coming from a tire tax.

To reduce carbon pollution:

- ODOT must limit highway expansions to avoid induced demand and increasing car traffic.
- We should reduce highway congestion by funding mode-shifting to rail for freight and passengers, public transit and active transportation.
- We should reduce toxic tailpipe emissions by incentivizing a shift from gas and diesel vehicles to electric vehicles

Air pollution and tire pollution cause serious health problems. 1 in 4 Oregonians don't drive. Let's integrate reduction of air and climate pollution into all land use and transportation planning to maximize benefits of planning residences close to trip destinations (work, shopping, etc) and provide parking at commuter transit sites.

We need to develop stable funding for ODOT, ultimately independent of the sale of gasoline, to be able to meet the goals stated here. A charge based on vehicle-miles-traveled (VMT) or a road-user-charge (RUC) should be the base of a reformed funding mechanism. There need to be offsets for low income and rural drivers. (Note: OR gas tax is currently significantly lower than WA and especially

CA. This revenue has been stable but inflationary pressures make it inadequate to fund transportation needs.) We should at least maintain the gas tax, indexed to inflation, until a RUC is fully implemented.

ODOT's major project proposals have been opaque to the legislature, regional and urban planners, and the public both in planning and cost. The Legislature should require any new, large highway projects to have clear, feasible funding mechanisms separate from baseline ODOT funding, with rigorous oversight.

ODOT should reveal projections for emissions reductions or increases resulting from any major highway project. The Legislature should require ODOT to create and make available to the public and other planners 3-D scale models for large projects significantly in advance of project approval.

ODOT must accurately track reduction of carbon emissions toward established goals and make such assessment publicly accessible. ODOT should take additional actions if the reduction does not meet the goal of being fossil fuel free by 2050.

ODOT should provide measurable goals for system attributes of safety, climate and equity, with a public dashboard for tracking.

The Legislature should require ODOT to engage directly with regional and urban transportation planning bodies for planning and funding.

We appreciate your holding listening sessions as we strive together to develop the very best transportation system.

Thank you.

Joseph Stenger MD, Co-Chair

The Transportation Committee, Mobilizing Climate Action Together (MCAT)