

Submitter: Dick Dolgonas
On Behalf Of: NA
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure: SB5506

TO: Joint Committee on Ways & Means
FROM: Dick Dolgonas
Roseburg, Oregon

RE: Testimony submittal for hearing on April 21, 2023

Thank you for holding a hearing in Roseburg, the heart of Oregon's forgotten valley.

Housing, homelessness and education are frequently cited as major issues facing the state. Transportation impacts all those issues, as well as the life of every resident, has a major impact on the state budget, and is a huge factor in our economy and environment.

In Oregon, transportation contributes 40% of greenhouse gas emissions. According to a new report from Oregon Global Warming Commission we've missed the 2020 greenhouse gas target and need to step up the effort. We must make changes in our transportation system that reflect that necessity, make it safer, improve our communities and the economy and look toward the future.

Safety, particularly in rural areas and for all modes, demands attention. According to the ROUTES Initiative from USDOT:

- ? While only 19% of the nation's population lives in rural areas, 45% of the nation's highway fatalities occur on rural roads.
- ? 34% of all highway-rail crossing fatalities occur in rural areas, and the rural highway fatality rate is more than twice that in urban areas.
- ? Nearly half of all truck vehicle-miles-traveled (VMT) occur on rural roads and two-thirds of rail freight originates in rural areas.
- ? 90% of posted (limited weight) bridges are in rural areas.

The proportion of people with driving licenses has fallen for every age group under 40, and on the latest data, is still falling. And even those who do have them are driving less.

Transportation funding must reflect the following:

- ? Transportation safety and other critical issues throughout the state must not take a back seat to funding for Portland area roadway projects.
- ? There are simply too many single occupancy motor vehicles used for

commuting in our major urban areas. In addition to other benefits noted, getting single occupancy motor vehicles off the roads in these areas will improve the ability to move products and resources.

? Adding to the current system will not address climate crisis.

? We need to fix bridges for seismic events and repair roads, not build more, particularly when maintenance is already being cut for the existing system.

? Building and widening roadways is contrary to trends in automobile use.

There are many benefits to other transportation options that address the safety and environmental issues and help create healthy, vital communities.

What's worked for the last 100 years isn't working now and will only make the transition to a safer, more sustainable, environmentally appropriate system harder. Trying to build our way out of congestion sacrifices too much in terms of other needs for limited funds, is inequitable, unsafe, and unattractive.

ODOT has smart, hardworking employees and some truly great programs: The Blueprint for Urban Design, Great Streets, creating a climate office, etc., but ODOT still can't seem to truly take those to heart and make those efforts the center of their work. Without those efforts integrated into every aspect of their work, they are only frosting on an unsafe, unsustainable cake. Widening roads is still just digging the hole deeper.

We know the best time to start was "yesterday." There is no doubt the transition of our transportation system to better reflect current and future needs will be difficult, but that does not mean it is unnecessary.

Please help make the transition:

? By using a statewide focus on safety, repairing what we have and bringing bridges up to seismic standards.

? By using funds requested for all large projects that reinforce use of single occupancy motor vehicles in our large metropolitan areas to instead create livable, safe communities throughout the state with appropriate means to travel within and between communities.

Thank you.