



March 10, 2025

Joint Committee On Transportation
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: Oppose Senate Bill 94

Co-Chairs Gorsek and McLain, Co-Vice Chairs Starr and Boshart Davis, Members of the Joint Committee On Transportation,

The Oregon Association of County Engineers and Surveyors (OACES), an affiliate of the Association of Oregon Counties (AOC), represents Oregon's 36 county public works agencies and road departments across the state. County roads are a critical component of Oregon's integrated road system and are responsible for over 60% of Oregon's non-federal road network, over 32,000 total miles, and 3,400 bridges.

Under current law, the maximum allowable weight for a seven-axle vehicle is 80,000 pounds. Some exemptions are made for public service vehicles and special cases where a permit is required. Senate Bill 94 proposes to add a new exemption up to 129,000 pounds, exclusively for the dairy industry.

County road officials from across the state support the transportation of milk and milk products as a vital industry in Oregon. Engineers and maintenance crews work diligently to allow businesses to haul loads safely and efficiently. However, county bridges simply were not designed to safely transport a 129,000-pound truck, a significant increase over existing legal limits.

Heavy trucks cause wear and tear to the transportation system, few facilities are more impacted than county bridges. Counties simply can not afford to replace or repair bridges to meet even current requirements. A total of 987 county bridges have become restricted for heavy trucks, known as being "load rated." Many of these load rated bridges are located in farming areas, impacting local businesses' ability to deliver products to market, or in forested areas, which jeopardize wildfire response efforts and evacuation routes. In some regions, up to 45% of county bridges have been restricted. If passed, SB 94 would require every bridge in counties with significant dairy industry to be load rated to determine whether the bridge can accommodate increased loads. This process comes at a cost to county road departments and inevitably results in restrictions. Additionally, large culverts, while not load rated, pose additional concerns related to safety and adequacy to accommodate increased weights.

County road departments oppose SB 94, which would result in unfunded expenses for additional bridge analysis and potential upgrades. It would also increase liabilities for the public that counties simply cannot afford. We urge you to support sustainable funding for road and

**Oregon Association of County Engineers and Surveyors (OACES)
Association of Oregon Counties (AOC), County Road Program (CRP)**

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bridge operations, maintenance, safety, and preservation to meet the needs of the existing transportation system.

County road officials are grateful for the opportunity to submit testimony on SB 94 and are available to work with business partners such as the Tillamook County Creamery Association and Darigold to find solutions and funding for road and bridge improvements that support the efficient movement of their farm-to-market goods.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mikel Diwan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Mikel Diwan
President, Oregon Association of County Engineers and Surveyors
Public Works Director, Lincoln County