

Submitter: Mel Scott

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation Reinvestment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2025

Dear Co-Chairs McLain and Gorsek, Vice Chairs Boshart-Davis and Starr, and members

You are taking important steps to improve accountability. This bill strengthens legislative oversight of major highway projects and launches an external audit of the agency. We urge legislators to maintain a strong focus on ODOT's performance in safety, climate, and accountability, ensuring public funds are used wisely and in the public interest now and in future transportation decisions.

\* Large-scale and costly road expansions in the Portland area demand trade-offs from funding for the rest of the state. By ensuring coastal, central, eastern and southern Oregonians have a fair share of the funds, we create a better future for everyone.

\* When it comes to road investments, Oregon needs a Fix-it-First approach, one where we take care of the potholes, road repairs, and broken guardrails before we pursue expensive highway expansions in Portland.

\* Oregon needs stronger accountability for megaproject spending. When the price tags balloon beyond what was promised, it takes money away from the things Oregonians actually asked for, such as safety improvements, transit options, and basic road maintenance. We need a clear accountability process so Oregonians can trust that every dollar goes toward our values: safety, health, and the freedom to choose how we get around.

\* Oregonians deserve to know where their tax dollars go. Right now, there's no clear public record of how ODOT spends its money.

\* It's more expensive to lock people into car dependency than providing accessible, affordable choices that meet their transportation needs.

\* Oregonians should have the freedom to choose how they move from city to city without needing to own a private motor vehicle. More options like expanded passenger rail and regional buses allow people to avoid commuter traffic and safely travel with confidence while also reducing the need for costly highway megaprojects.

\* If we raise money for programs like operations and maintenance, that money should be committed to not being moved around later to fill gaps in bloated highway construction budgets.

\* Oregonians are shifting focus from big highway projects to taking care of what we already have. In recent transportation roundtables, people emphasized the need for basics like fixing potholes and plowing roads in winter, not costly megaprojects.

We tax payers are asking for proper penetration of our dollars and ODOT is unfortunately stuck in a single minded and past of getting more cars on the road while ignoring privately owned becoming that of new smaller items that can be harmed by not reducing car and truck interactions with these newer ways of travel. ODOT must be held accountable to the owners of more modern vehicles and not just to the owners of cars or trucks.

There is no widening of any highway that has reduced traffic and if ODOT wants to continue push this narrative evidence of this must be produced by them. It usually increases traffic so they must be forced to show avoidance of that happening before beginning of widening any part of the highway in Oregon. We do not want car driving Oregonians to feel that they were swindled and others to feel left out who have turned to other modes of transportation.

Thank you for what I hope as a resident of Oregon is an easy vote of yes.