



To: Joint Committee in Transportation Reinvestment

From: Johnny Earl, SEIU 503 President

Date: June 12, 2025

RE: TRIP Transportation Package

Good afternoon, Co-Chair Gorsek, Co-Chair McLain, Vice co-chair Boshart Davis, Vice co-chair Starr, and other members of the Committee.

My name is Johnny Earl and I'm Currently serving as the President of SEIU 503. Our union represents over 72,000 Workers throughout the State of Oregon. Which are Caregivers, Homecare workers, private non-profit workers, and State Workers. This includes the rank-and-file workers at ODOT. You'll hear from a few of them in a few minute.

I would like to start by thanking you for committing over a year of your time and energy on drafting a transportation package that reflects the needs of Coastal, Rural, Central, and Eastern Oregon. You have listened to countless hours of testimony during your 12-stop roadshow from Tillamook to Coos Bay to Medford to Ontario. It was clear that communities asked you to invest in our infrastructure and public transit, make our neighborhood streets safer, and maintain fog lines and reflexive guardrails to ensure visibility.

I am here to today because the jobs of 1,000 ODOT workers are on the line. Therefore, I to ask you to be bold. Transportation is a bi-partisan issue because we all rely on our safe and well-maintained highways and roads. Further disinvestment and failing to modernize ODOT's revenue structure will worsen our already deteriorating transportation system. I know that Rural, Central, and Eastern Oregon will be hit the hardest by inaction. Who is going to show up when there is a multicar accident or an unexpected landslide due to heavy rain? Cuts are only going to hurt the communities that you represent. Cuts means that highways will be closed due to landslides, snow, wildfires, and other major weather events.

As much as this is about maintaining our infrastructure, the stabilization of ODOT is also about keeping our crews safe. We don't want to be another headline. "ODOT worker struck by vehicle." Please remember that ODOT is made up of dedicated people who show up each and every day, stay late, and don't go home until the job is done. They are spouses, parents, children, and siblings. We are your neighbors, local coaches, and veterans. In the more rural parts of our state, many even know us by our first names.

Allow me to share the consequences of recent minor cuts. In May, in just one day, three serious crashes were reported in southern Oregon near Medford. One of the major collisions on I-5 involved our Incident Response workers. The two-man crew responded to an earlier accident and attempted to steer traffic without another flagger when their ODOT rig was struck by a semi-truck. Thank god, that these two men survived and were able to walk out of the hospital with only minor injuries. The problem is that these types of incidents are becoming more frequent because we are down to skeleton crews. This is a direct result of disinvestment from ODOT core services.

In closing, I ask all of you to come together and land a transportation package that addresses the needs of communities all around the state. You will decide whether help is there or not in the case of an emergency.

Thank you for your time,

Johnny Earl