



Good evening Co-Chairs, Vice Chairs, and members of the committee.

For the record, my name is Roger Birkeland and I am an ODOT Transportation Maintenance Specialist out of Arlington. My crew services I-84 and Highway 19, which is one of the main roads that connects the freeway to rural areas like Condon and Fossil, allowing them access to the supply chain to receive important things like groceries and medicine.

These roadways experience heavy winter weather conditions, and maintaining these roads is critical to the well being of citizens as well as commerce. We often are first responders to accidents and incidents, receiving calls at all hours of the day or night, whether it's a wreck, a flat tire or roadway debris. As I wrote this testimony, I was preparing to go to bed and wake up at 3 am to relieve a crew dealing with a fire all night - a fire outside of my normal service area, but with our current staffing levels, they're pulling from all over just to respond to events like that.

Shutting down our shop or any of these rural shops would be detrimental to any commerce traveling on state or federal highways, as well as rural people who need safe roads and access to the necessities to maintain a healthy, normal life. Each one of us in the shop try to treat the roadways as if our own families were using those roads, which they often do. We work tirelessly to address every kind of hazard, from fire and ice to potholes and stalled motorists as quickly as possible, to keep the public traveling worry free. Without sufficient funding, we will be unable to keep up this service. We need elected officials like yourselves to take action.

Thank you for your time,

Roger Birkeland