



February 6, 2026

Dear Chair Gorsek, Vice Chair Weber, and members of the committee,

My name is Cassie Wilson and I'm the Legislative Manager at 1000 Friends of Oregon. Thank you for the opportunity to speak tonight in support of SB 1542 and SB 1543.

For too long, it's been easy to see that the way our state is prioritizing transportation spending isn't working. Oregonians have lost trust in the state as roads and bridges crumble while new projects receive significant investment, though also not enough to complete those either.

I'm a lot closer to and more involved in "how the sausage gets made" when it comes to ODOT's transportation decisions than your average Oregonian. I'm a member of ODOT's Region 1 Area Commission on Transportation (though could not swing both meetings tonight like Zachary), I follow the Oregon Transportation Commission meetings and have testified plenty of times over the years. I want to be a messenger about how the process works to the communities and other stakeholders I work with, and an active part of helping it work better.... But even *I* am frequently struggling to do either one of these things because of barriers these bills address.

It's hard to collaborate, problem-solve, and engage with each other to make strong decisions when: We don't have important information about projects or options available to us before we're asked to weigh in as an ACT, or to sign up to testify. At the OTC, the window to sign up to comment often closes just a few hours after we've learned what's actually on the agenda, and sometimes materials only become available AFTER that window closes.

Decisions about investments often come to ACTs or the OTC without full context about how they'll perform or what the tradeoffs may be. Conversely, when we receive reports about systemwide performance - traffic deaths and injuries, emissions, state of repair - even if they come with indications we should be investing more in things that can solve the problem, that doesn't get connected to the way we're actually investing.

I'm supporting these bills because I think they'll promote transparency and good decision-making throughout the state transportation system - both the parts I'm involved with and the parts I'm not.

Measure What We Drive requires every project to earn its funding through a public safety, maintenance, and climate impact score, ensuring we fix our crumbling roads and bridges before we think about building more. It will also increase public accountability and transparency by establishing a dashboard where Oregonians will finally be able to see how their tax dollars are improving pavement quality, bridge maintenance, road safety, and emissions. That's not just something that's useful in my work within the ODOT planning process, that's something I can point others to when they have questions. Even if we don't love every decision, understanding how and why it's made helps build trust in the process and the dollars we invest.

Guardrails for Good Governance helps by creating Oregon's first binding Transportation Debt Management Policy. ODOT will no longer be able to borrow money without a joint sign-off from the

State Treasury and the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) and consideration of the opportunity costs. To set a higher standard for transparency, this bill would also require OTC materials to be posted at least 24 hours before the public comment period closes, giving the public a real chance to be heard. It's hard to believe this wasn't already the case - but since debt service sets our priorities for us so far into the future, it explains some of the tradeoffs that have been invisible to many of us in the visible decision-making process of the present. We can't ask future folks in your positions or mine to keep shouldering those tradeoffs if we have another choice, and we do.

I urge your support of both of these bills, which work better together and help build a more transparent, more successful transportation system for Oregon.

Thank you.

Cassie Wilson

Cassie Wilson
Legislative Manager