



WASHINGTON COUNTY

OREGON

February 9, 2026

Senate Interim Committee on Transportation

RE: Washington County testimony on SB 1542

Dear Sen. Gorsek, Sen. Weber, Sen. Frederick, Sen. Pham, Sen. Starr and Committee On Transportation:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on SB 1542 and SB 1543. We appreciate the intent of the two bills to provide greater oversight and accountability into the state's transportation planning and funding process. In general, SB 1543 is more focused and easier to implement. However, SB 1542, while well-intentioned, includes many proposed process changes that need additional review and coordination amongst stakeholders. **SB 1542 should be removed from consideration in the short session and instead studied closely with a full engagement process as part of the larger transportation discussion for the 2027 long legislative session.**

Washington County does not support SB 1542 as written. We appreciate the intent behind SB 1542, including the focus on operations and maintenance, setting guardrails for the largest and most expensive projects, and additional reporting and transparency around decision making, and would like to work collaboratively with other stakeholders to refine these concepts for implementation. However, the bill as written represents sweeping changes with potentially large financial and operational impacts and would likely result in unintended consequences without a more comprehensive review by all stakeholders.

The draft SB 1542, even with the -1 amendment, includes several concerning elements, including:

- **Unfunded reporting and analysis requirements.** The bill adds new reporting and analysis requirements for ODOT. This may be a good thing in the future, but as this bill does not come with any funding for ODOT, there is likely limited capacity to complete this work in their current budget climate.
- **Additional process and delay by inserting Metro into the scoring methodology process.** It is unnecessary to add special consideration and additional process for Metro when they already have a seat on the R1ACT along with other ODOT Region 1 representatives. ODOT Region 1 covers Hood River County, Clackamas County, Multnomah County, and the eastern portion of Washington County; it's important that these voices are equally represented.
- **An overly prescriptive methodology process.** The bill says the OTC shall develop a scoring methodology to rank projects, but also says the highest weight shall be assigned to safety and preservation projects. While this may be the preference of the region, this should be determined by the ACTs and the OTC in the development of the methodology.
- **Additional process and delay by adding a new advisory committee to the OTC.** This introduces additional process and delay into what is already a statewide process with input

from the Area Commissions on Transportation along with opportunities for public comment. Additionally, almost 1/3 of the proposed advisory committee seats are reserved for advocacy groups over technical experts or community members. Any advisory committee should include the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Area Commissions on Transportation to provide perspective on regional priorities.

Please consider removing SB 1542 from short session consideration and instead include these proposals as part of the larger transportation discussion for the 2027 long legislative session. We appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,



Stephen Roberts
Director of Land Use & Transportation