

Submitter: Andrew Simrin
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Transportation
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1542

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

I'm testifying today because Oregonians need a transportation system that maximizes its investments in safety, road and bridge maintenance, and climate impacts, and does not put Oregon's future at risk by taking on unnecessary debt.

That is why I am asking you to pass both Guardrails for Good Governance and Measure What We Drive.

We need to ensure that our dollars are going to projects that are aligning with state transportation goals.

Guardrails for Good Governance is important to me because:
ODOT's loans have increased by 400% since 2007 and are outpacing the money coming in, leaving less for bridge and road maintenance, seismic retrofits, and safety investments.
Current policies incentivize ODOT to take on more debt without a completed project plan that includes a full analysis of costs, trade-offs, and debt implications.
Provides the public with advance notice of upcoming meeting agendas, ensuring they have the information and the opportunity to engage in transportation decisions relevant to them.

Measure What We Drive is important to me because of accountability, transparency, and reporting:

ODOT is building new things we can't afford without public accountability or legislative oversight.
It mandates investment in existing roads and bridges when they are not meeting maintenance standards.
It requires ODOT to provide an assessment on how new projects align with transportation goals.
It requires ODOT to provide a public accountability dashboard showing how the agency is doing in meeting transportation goals.

With limited transportation dollars, we need to make every investment count without leveraging our future. Oregonians desperately need projects to prioritize maintaining current roads and bridges, investing in safety, and advancing a climate-forward transportation sector.

In addition, these policies are based on proven policies from other states and are budget-neutral. These bills will improve alignment and accountability in meeting ODOT's transportation goals. Oregonians need Guardrails for Good Governance and Measure What We Drive to pass.