



# The Climate Reality Project<sup>®</sup>

## PORTLAND CHAPTER

Dear Chair Gorsek, Vice-Chair Weber, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing on behalf of the Climate Reality Project Portland Chapter to urge you to support Measure What We Drive (SB 1542) and Guardrails for Good Governance (SB 1543). As an organization committed to building green communities, climate justice and public health, we see the need for a transportation system that prioritizes safety, road and bridge maintenance, and climate impacts, and avoids putting Oregon's future at risk with unnecessary debt. These bills are needed to ensure that ODOT is held accountable to measure and disclose a variety of costs, benefits, and impacts before approving new transportation projects.

We are currently burdened with debt left over from projects carried out without the needed oversight to ensure they made financial sense and were beneficial for the climate and the public. Revenue cannot meet the costs of these new projects that are not meeting our safety, sustainability, and accessibility needs in this state.

Measure What We Drive (SB 1542) will put a stop to ODOT's current practice of taking on new debt-incurring projects before fixing the roads we use every day. 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 infrastructure as a top priority. A publicly accountable dashboard and a transparent scoring process will finally let Oregonians see whether our tax dollars are improving pavement quality, bridge maintenance, road safety, and emissions.

Guardrails for Good Governance (SB 1542) will fix the outdated policies that incentivize ODOT to take on excessive debt for new projects instead of bridge and road maintenance, seismic retrofits, and safety investments that make Oregon a better place to live. With Guardrails for Good Governance, ODOT must show the public the total price tag, including interest and opportunity costs (i.e. which other projects will be cancelled to pay for this one) before a single shovel hits the ground, and ODOT will not

be allowed to borrow money without a joint sign-off from the State Treasury and the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC).

These bills will enable proper evaluation of future projects to make sure they are safe, sustainable, and accessible. We must raise our standards by having new criteria in place to ensure future projects are beneficial and not a hindrance to the people of Oregon. Similar policies have been proven out in states including Virginia and Washington,.

In order for our communities in Oregon to thrive we must have a safer, sustainable, and well-maintained transportation system within our state. Having these new policies in place is a solid step forward so that ODOT will fund the projects we need to meet these goals and not burden ourselves with expensive projects that will hinder our progress towards better transportation.

Thank you for your time and your service,

Raymond Perkins  
Member of the Legislative Committee  
Climate Reality Project Portland Chapter

#### About The Climate Reality Project Portland Chapter

The Climate Reality Project (CRP) Portland Chapter is a local, volunteer-led chapter of The Climate Reality Project, an international nonprofit of 5 million members led by climate leader and former US Vice President Al Gore, whose mission is to catalyze global solutions to the climate crisis. Our legislative committee bases its advocacy on CRP's 5 pillars: a just transition to clean energy, zero carbon transportation, climate justice and public health, green communities, and a fair, representative democracy.  
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