

Submitter: Helena Birecki
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Transportation
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1543

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

I support the passage of both Measure What We Drive (SB 1542) and Guardrails for Good Governance (SB 1543), because these policies combined create a common sense base from which to make our transportation sector more safe, affordable, climate forward, and accountable. They create a framework so that roads and bridges are fixed before new major projects are considered-- I think this is absolutely essential for a working economy and fiscal prudence.

Measure What We Drive further requires every project to earn its funding through a public safety, maintenance, and climate impact score, and Oregonians will be able to see how projects are ranked.

Guardrails for Good Governance will fix old policies that incentivize ODOT to take on unaffordable debt by tightening oversight to make sure funds are used responsibly and efficiently. When this bill passes, ODOT will have to 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. Also, by creating Oregon's first binding Transportation Debt Management Policy, this bill will prohibit ODOT from borrowing money unless they get a joint sign-off from the State Treasury and the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC).

I want ODOT to do maintenance, seismic retrofits, and safety and investments that make Oregon a better place to live. Don't you? Please pass SB 1542 and SB 1543.

Sincerely,
Helena Birecki