



February 11, 2025

Oregon State Legislature
Senate Committee On Transportation
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for Senate Bill 1542 and 1543, Relating to transportation and guardrails for good governance

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

On behalf of the more than 55,000 members and supporters of the Sierra Club Oregon Chapter, we write in support of Senate Bills 1582 and 1583, which together provide much needed guardrails for transportation decision making.

SB 1542 directs the OTC to develop a 10 year Capital Investment Plan that includes a scoring and ranking framework for transportation projects, and requires the OTC to prioritize projects based on measurable impacts, such as safety, climate impact and cost effectiveness. The bill also directs ODOT to produce a condition report on highways and requires the OTC to post expanded project information on its website, increasing the information available to the public and enabling community members to see how decisions align with state goals.

SB 1543 directs the OTC to develop a comprehensive debt financing management policy for transportation projects and provides clear guidance on how ODOT uses bonds and other debt instruments, requiring careful evaluation of risks, trade-offs, alternatives, and long-term impacts before debt is issued. The bill embeds specific accountability mechanisms into the decision-making process, such as submission of all proposed bond issuances to the OTC for approval before sending to the State Treasurer, a public comment period, and a structured evaluation considering multiple factors.

Sound decision making and governance in transportation planning are essential to advancing equitable, sustainable, and climate-aligned investments. SB 1582 and 1583 ensure that transportation projects are evaluated across multiple critical dimensions, and promote transparency and accountability by providing decision-makers and the public with the information they need to ensure that fiscal decisions are evaluated not only on short term needs but also with the best future outcomes for all Oregonians in mind. Please vote yes on SB 1542 and SB 1543.

Respectfully submitted,

Emily Bowes, Policy Strategist

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Emily Bowes". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Emily" and last name "Bowes" clearly distinguishable.

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