

Submitter: Jessica Vaughan

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Transportation

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1543

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

I strongly support the Move Oregon Forward package, including Measure What We Drive (SB 1542) and Guardrails for Good Governance (SB 1543). Together, these bills bring long-overdue accountability, transparency, and fiscal discipline to Oregon's transportation system at a time when public trust and transportation dollars are both stretched thin. Oregonians deserve a system that prioritizes safety, maintenance, and climate resilience—not one that quietly accumulates debt while basic infrastructure continues to crumble

Guardrails for Good Governance is especially urgent. Since 2007, ODOT's loan repayment costs have surged by 400%, diverting funds away from road and bridge maintenance, seismic upgrades, and safety improvements that communities rely on every day. Current policies incentivize borrowing without adequate oversight or public disclosure of long-term costs. This bill establishes Oregon's first binding Transportation Debt Management Policy, requiring meaningful checks and balances before new debt is taken on, and ensuring that the true cost of projects—including interest and opportunity costs—is disclosed upfront

Measure What We Drive complements these reforms by ensuring that transportation investments actually deliver results for the public. Too often, new projects are prioritized over maintaining the roads, bridges, and streets people already use—without transparent metrics to show whether those investments improve safety, accessibility, or emissions outcomes. By requiring a public accountability dashboard and scoring projects based on safety, maintenance, accessibility, and climate impact, this bill ensures that limited transportation dollars are directed where they do the most good

At their core, these bills are about stewardship—of public money, public safety, and Oregon's future. They are budget-neutral, grounded in proven models from other states, and focused on making government work better for the people it serves. With rising infrastructure needs and limited resources, Oregon cannot afford opaque decision-making or unchecked debt. I urge you to pass both Measure What We Drive and Guardrails for Good Governance and move Oregon's transportation system forward in a way that is responsible, transparent, and climate-forward.

Jessica Vaughan