



350PDX
3625 N. Mississippi Avenue
Portland, OR 97227
350pdx.org

February 10, 2026

Re: Support SB 1542 & 1543

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

SB 1542 and SB 1543 are common sense policies that together will help to not only make our transportation sector more accountable, but also more efficient and impactful when it comes to alignment with Oregon's climate goals.

350PDX is a nonprofit organization with a focus on a healthy and sustainable climate and environment, with thousands of members in the Portland area. Our name is based on the scientific threshold of 350 parts per million, the maximum amount of carbon dioxide present in the atmosphere to avoid the worst impacts of climate change.¹ The average for 2025 was over 426 ppm. In Oregon, the transportation sector represents about 35% of our greenhouse gas emissions, which is the largest share of total state emissions.² While SB 1542 and 1543 do not specifically help reduce climate change, they will help increase accountability and transparency for Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), which can ensure that the projects we choose to take on as a state are beneficial to the public.

SB 1542 (Measure What We Drive) will put into place a scoring system that will take a holistic look at potential transportation investments. Through the performance-based framework detailed in this bill, each project ODOT decides to take on would be scored based on climate impact, public safety, general maintenance, and more. Providing the public with a visible scoring methodology will allow for more transparency and accountability so ODOT can rebuild trust with Oregonians. This framework would also give ODOT a performance-based tool for decision-making regarding which projects to prioritize. This can help us choose wisely between large, expensive projects and smaller projects to maintain what we already have.

SB 1543 (Guardrails for Good Governance) goes hand in hand with SB 1542. It ensures that ODOT will need approval from both the Oregon State Treasury and Oregon Transportation Commission before taking on additional debt. It is a key check on ODOT that

¹ <https://350.org/what-does-our-name-350-mean/>

² In 2023: <https://www.oregon.gov/deq/ghgp/pages/ghg-inventory.aspx>



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will ensure that projects today are not an extreme burden on tomorrow's taxpayers. On top of this, it will require ODOT to be even more transparent to the public by requiring ODOT to show the full context of its funding decisions (total cost, interest, and opportunity costs, and so forth). As it stands today, ODOT does not have the proper checks and balances to make sure it is making choices aligned with public transportation needs, nor a substantive argument for its current unchecked status.

Sustainability is important, and maintaining good transportation infrastructure is an important factor in achieving it. By passing both of these bills, we will ensure that our transportation infrastructure is well maintained, forward looking, and economically viable.

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