

**78th Oregon Legislative Assembly -- 2015 Regular Session
Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development
Monday, June 22, 2015**

**Testimony submitted in support of the *ConnectOregon*
Multimodal Transportation System Improvement Program**

Martin Callery, Chief Commercial Officer, Oregon International Port of Coos Bay

Co-Chairs Gomberg and Johnson, members of the Committee, my name is Martin Callery. I am Chief Commercial Officer for the Oregon International Port of Coos Bay. I also serve as Vice-Chair of the Oregon Freight Advisory Committee, and am a member of the Oregon Rail Users League and the Oregon Public Ports Association. Additionally I chair the South West Area Commission on Transportation and served as Rail Stakeholder with the Lane Area Commission on Transportation.

I am here today representing the Oregon Public Ports Association (OPPA) and the Oregon Rail Users League (ORULE), and I appreciate the opportunity to testify on the importance of the *ConnectOregon* program and in support of the proposed changes necessary to keep *ConnectOregon* viable into the future.

From its creation in 2005, *ConnectOregon* has consistently provided the strategic funding needed to sustain and expand Oregon's multimodal transportation system. *ConnectOregon* has helped keep Oregon businesses competitive in domestic and international markets, while also helping create well-paying jobs across the state. The \$382 million invested through five rounds of *ConnectOregon* have leveraged more than \$500 million in other transportation system investments and those totals will only grow as *ConnectOregon* V projects move toward completion.

Oregon, whose economy is driven by the success of its traded-sector, produces and ships a vast array of commodities to customers throughout North America and the world; agricultural and wood products, high tech equipment, transportation components, consumer goods, recreation equipment, fines wines and artisan beers . . . this list is long and growing.

The marine and rail sectors statewide have benefitted significantly from *ConnectOregon*; Port of Newport terminal access, Port of Morrow marine and rail intermodal connections, Port of St. Helens marine and rail infrastructure rehabilitation, Teevin Bros. and Sause Bros. combining efforts for a lower Columbia River intermodal facility, Port of Portland significant marine and rail infrastructure and dredge rehabilitation, Portland & Western Railroad corridor improvements, City of Prineville Railway intermodal transfer facilities, Lake County railroad rehabilitation, BNSF and UP leveraged system investments, Central Oregon & Pacific Railroad freight rail yard, Tarr intermodal facility, several private-sector rail facilities moving commodities from truck to rail

Other examples of *ConnectOregon* success stories include improvements to both commercial service and general aviation facilities across the state, transit system improvements and new bicycle and pedestrian facilities linking communities and in some cases connecting residents to jobs.

The *ConnectOregon* program is unique in its scope and the rigorous vetting and review process required to receive a grant award. The Oregon Department of Transportation listened well to the Oregon Legislature and has created a multi-faceted, transparent process for insuring that projects funded through *ConnectOregon* truly serve the transportation needs of the State and support the State's multimodal transportation system and the State's trade-driven economy.

The proposed changes in the *ConnectOregon* program will create challenges for some prospective participants, however the changes will further strengthen the program and help ensure that funded projects represent the best investments in Oregon's multimodal system and meet the needed life expectancy standards that truly benefit the system.

In the future Oregon businesses and the Oregon economy, along with transportation system providers, will benefit even more if the *ConnectOregon* program can be funded at the original \$100 million per biennium. As the state continues to recover from the recent economic downturn, there are and will be greater intermodal component and connectivity needs that must be met, and as the system improves there will be opportunities for job creation and positive environmental benefits.

The one aspect of the current program that needs to be evaluated and reconsidered is including bicycle/pedestrian projects and transit system improvements in the same competitive process as freight mobility evaluations. The needs of moving goods versus the needs for moving people are significantly different. There must be a *ConnectOregon* program for bike/ped and transit, but those projects must compete in a different evaluation process since the criteria for such projects is decidedly different than the criteria for moving goods.



Martin Callery, Chief Commercial Officer
Oregon International Port of Coos Bay
P.O. Box 1215 • 125 Central Ave, Suite 300
Coos Bay, OR 97420-0311
Office: 541-267-7678 / Cell: 541-297-2007
Email: mcallery@portofcoosbay.com