



# Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

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**DATE:** March 1, 2017

**TO:** Senate Committee on Business and Transportation

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**SUBJECT:** SB 454

## INTRODUCTION

Senate Bill 454 directs ODOT to create a Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area highway improvement plan and to undertake a number of specific projects to improve the highway system in the gorge. The bill does not identify where the funding for the improvements would come from.

## DISCUSSION

The bill also directs ODOT to undertake specific projects, including improving facilities that are not owned by the state, and make improvements to the highway system in the gorge. The bill directs ODOT to:

- Add a westbound lane on I-84 at Exit 47
- Provide matching funds to local communities that allows them to receive federal funds
- Improve emergency services
- Create a Cascade Locks weigh station
- Improve the Bridge of the Gods(owned by the Port of Cascade Locks), adding bicycle and pedestrian facilities
- Develop and implement a gorge transportation plan that addresses traffic mitigation, improves traffic safety and protects the environment.

ODOT currently develops a Statewide Transportation Improvement Program—our four-year capital improvement program—that identifies funding and scheduling of transportation projects. SB 454 would have us undertake a similar effort for just one portion of the state; the bill would create a duplicate process for the Columbia Gorge area.

SB 454 does not provide any limit to the matching funds for local communities that ODOT must provide and would create inequity with the rest of the cities and counties in the state that are required to provide their own matching funds. It directs ODOT to create a Cascade Locks weigh station when one already exists and does not consider other statewide needs for facilities.

## SUMMARY

SB 454 directs ODOT to undertake specific projects in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area and to provide matching funds to local governments. The projects identified in the bill may not be the highest priority needs in the state. Matching funds to the local governments do not have any boundaries; no funding is provided for any of the components of the bill and it is unclear how we would prioritize these needs with the rest of the state needs.