



To: Joint Committee on Transportation Preservation and Modernization  
From: Chris Mercier, Tribal Council Member, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde  
Date: June 7, 2017  
Subject: Transportation Funding for Newberg-Dundee Bypass

Chair Beyer, Chair McKeown, Vice-Chair Boquist, Vice-Chair Bentz, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Chris Mercier, I am a member of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Tribal Council, I also serve on the Mid-Willamette Valley Area Commission on Transportation (MWACT). Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak today in support of continued funding for the Newberg-Dundee Bypass project.

We recognize that there are many needs identified across the state, and appreciate the committee's effort to tackle the biggest one - congestion in the Portland Metro area. The package you have put together also takes important steps to address projects outside the metro-area, including the Newberg-Dundee Bypass and we are grateful. We would ask that as you move swiftly on the Metro projects, allow other regions to take steps necessary **in the near future** to move their priority projects forward, and not miss critical opportunities like federal funding. This is the key issue for the Newberg-Dundee Bypass and we just want to underscore that as much as possible.

Tribes and local communities have really shown a strong willingness to be collaborative, resourceful and creative in getting the Newberg-Dundee Bypass project this far. We have invested 4 million dollars into Phase 1 as part of the local match. We look forward to continuing this strong partnership, along with the state, to keep the momentum going and move forward on Phase 2.

As you know, the Grand Ronde Tribe and our Spirit Mountain Casino is facing competition due to the opening of the Cowlitz Tribes casino in Vancouver, Washington. It is important for us in this newly competitive environment to continue to have safe and efficient transportation options for our employees, customers, and all Oregonian's who wish to travel to the coast, the reservation or Spirit Mountain.

Oregon is truly unique when it comes to the relationship between the state and the tribes. Together, we have done amazing things, from Governor Atiyeh and the creation of the Commission on Indian Services, to Governor Kitzhaber's Executive Order 96-30, and then passage of SB 770, which put into statute the government-to-government relationship. We should all be proud as Oregonians of the work done to solidify a strong bond between the state and the tribes. This is yet another example of the collaboration that continues to make Oregon a leader in state-tribal relations.

The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde urges your support.