

To Representative Weber and the Members of the Joint Committee of Transportation :

In reference to HB 4053, this letter attempts to list and categorize unnecessary dangerous situations from Milepost (MP 47) and MP 5 on the Hwy 6 stretch between Banks and Tillamook. The fixes for these scenarios should be low cost. This letter does not attempt to address higher cost fixes for rebuilding the road or creating pullout/chain-up areas which certainly would be useful as well.

The categories include:

1. Improving overall visibility and ability to judge on-coming traffic and road conditions
2. Elimination of insufficient and dangerous passing lanes
3. Conversion of short, opposing passing lanes into longer unidirectional passing lanes
4. Miscellaneous items

As indicated, these changes should be relatively low-cost to implement.

### **CATEGORY 1 – IMPROVING OVERALL VISIBILITY**

1. Designate Hwy 6 as a Safety Corridor requiring headlights to be used 24/7/365.

The ability to judge passing distance available to on-coming traffic is greatly improved when everyone uses headlights, all the time. The most difficult situation is when the closest on-coming car's headlights are off and it is trailed in the distance by a car with its headlights on. This is very common on many longer straight sections of the road, e.g. MP 38 – MP 36. Even in the summer, changing light conditions in shaded portions of the highway can make it difficult to properly judge distance to the leading on-coming vehicle. Note that actively enforcing headlight usage near the end of the corridor should generate revenue.

COST: Minimal

2. Create a No Parking Zone on Eastbound pullout area at the Glenwood Shell station.

It is nearly impossible to safely merge back onto Hwy 6 at the Shell station as parked trucks or other large vehicles obstruct view in both directions. The Westbound pullout could be left as is.

COST: Extremely minimal

3. Add a camera with temperature gauge at the Hwy 6 summit accessible via TripCheck

While the cameras and temperature gauges at Lee's Camp and junction of Hwy 6 and Hwy 8 are nice, drivers do not have a clear idea of current driving conditions at the summit. This is especially important in the winter. Hwy 26 has much better coverage at key points and this has been recently enhanced with the new camera at David Douglas Park. It's time Hwy 6 gets the same attention.

COST: Low

## **CATEGORY 2 – Eliminate Insufficient and Dangerous Passing Lanes**

1. Eliminate ALL passing lanes between junction of Hwy 6 and Hwy 8 (Gales Creek Rd) to just west of the Glenwood Shell Station. This section includes Dorman Pond, Coleman's Restaurant (now Chicken & Guns) and the Shell Station itself. It's a high merge and pullout section of the highway especially during the summer months. These passing lanes are insufficient and unnecessary because there are long passing sections existing just to the west of the Shell station and a dedicated passing EB passing lane approximately 1 mile to the east (ending at Timmerman Rd) of the Hwy 6 and Hwy 8 junction.
2. Eliminate passing lanes in both directions starting at MP 37 and ending less than ¼ mile to the east of MP 37. This is the sight of one recent fatality and there is an extremely long stretch of passing lanes in both directions just to the east (NW Agaard Rd to NW Timber Rd). There are multiple other passing opportunities to the west up to the summit. Additionally, the guardrails along this passing stretch make it impossible to bail out to the shoulder in the event of an imminent collision.
3. Eliminate passing lanes just west (less than ¼ mile) at the Glenwood Convenience Store. These lanes are of insufficient length and occur near a curve, a frequented store and the street entrance to the Glenwood store. There are sufficient passing opportunities to the east and west of here.
4. Eliminate the very short passing lanes in both directions which start at Stafford Rd (MP 47) and just to its west. These passing lanes are very short and occur around a double-blind S-corner. There are sufficient opportunities to pass to the east and west of here.
5. Eliminate the passing lanes at the Kings Mountain Trailhead parking lot near MP 25. These lanes are too short and there are two other long stretches to the west and a dedicated EB passing lane at MP 26. Both are within approximately one mile of this high merge area.
6. Eliminate the EB passing lanes between Wilson River RV Park and Mills Bridge Boat Launch near MP 5. Not only is the EB passing lane short but traffic turning onto Hwy 6 from steep driveways increases opportunity for head-on accidents. The WB passing opportunity here makes sense since the merge areas are on the north side of the highway allowing an easy passing of slow-moving vehicles turning into these areas. There are sufficient opportunities to pass in both directions to the west.
7. Eliminate the passing lanes between North Fork Rd and MP 23. This section is difficult to judge and very short. Drivers have already had two very long and safe opportunities to pass between Lee's Camp Store and King's Mountain Trailhead.

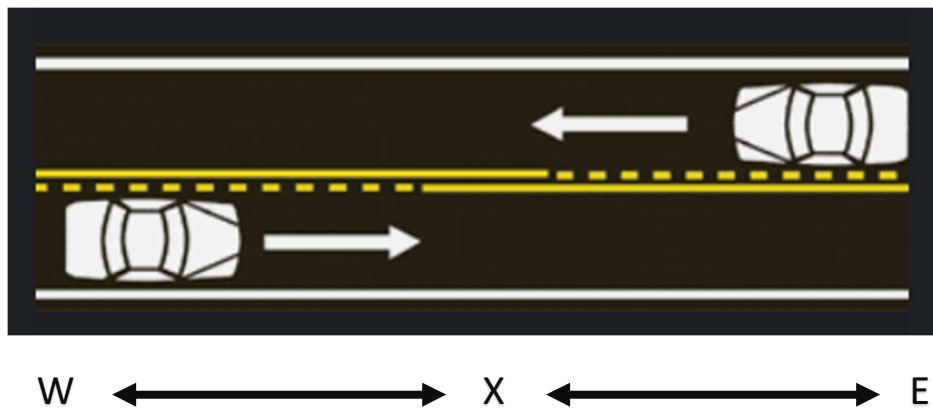
**COST:** Minimal if not zero as striping is already a part of ODOT budget

**CATEGORY 3 – Convert Short Opposing Passing Lanes to Double Long, Unidirectional Passing Lane**

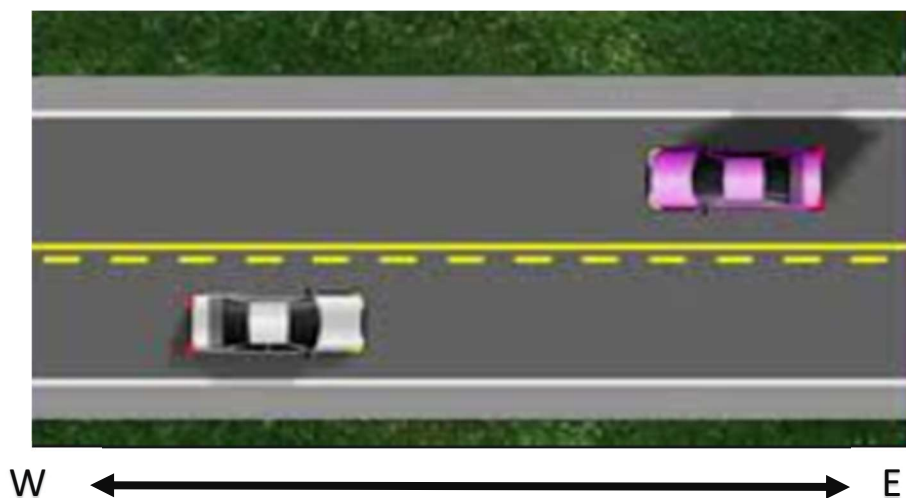
This category references two opposing, unidirectional passing lanes, each of insufficient length as shown in Figure 1. Even the most experienced and assertive of drivers will struggle to safely pass another vehicle at 55-60 mph when the passing lane is less than 1000 feet. To be more specific, if either the distance between W to X and/or E to X, is less than 1000 feet, conversion should happen. It would be much safer to convert two short opposing passing lanes into a single, unidirectional “double-long” passing lane of at least 1500 feet. The direction of the passing lane (EB or WB) could be alternated down the highway considering fairness, parking area and distance to next viable passing location.

For those unfamiliar with the highway, it’s not evident which passing lanes are long enough and which ones are not. The increase in traffic density over the past 20-30 years has naturally led to a larger number of accidents and near misses.

*Figure 1 Short Opposing Passing Lanes (Dangerous)*



*Figure 2 Double-Long Unidirectional Passing Lane (Safer)*



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The list below highlights some, but perhaps not all, of the sections of Hwy 6 which fall into this category. All of these passing lanes occur between the summit at MP 33 and

1. From MP 6 (east of Mills Bridge) to MP 8 (west of Siskeyville Boat Launch) there are 3 sections of highway that fall into this category. The worst is probably near MP 7.
2. The opposing passing lanes just east of MP 17 should be converted to EB only passing since a dedicated passing lane for WB traffic is located just to the west.
3. Between MP 19 and MP 20, there are two separate examples of short, opposing passing lanes which would benefit from unidirectional conversion.

COST: Minimal if not zero as striping is already a part of ODOT budget

#### **CATEGORY 4 – Miscellaneous items**

1. The addition of blue Ice Alert signs would give drivers an advanced warning of icy conditions which would hopefully encourage them to slow down. These are popular in some western states and once installed are a no cost item. These signs should be installed in all the frost prone areas along Gales Creek and the Wilson River. The Narrows MP 12 – MP 13.3 is one example of an area that ices over easily.

COST: Low

2. The stationing of police and/or ODOT chain-up gang at to-be-developed chain-up areas prior to heavy snow might help keep roads open.

COST: Unsure

As a resident living along Hwy 6 for 30 years and who makes the trip between Banks and Tillamook 50-100 times per year, I applaud your effort and the effort of the Highway 6 Community to make this highway as safe as possible. It is my hope that these low cost and easy to implement options will be taken into consideration.

Yours sincerely,

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