

July 17, 2024

Joint Committee on Transportation
Oregon State Capitol
Salem, Oregon 97301

Delivered via submission to: at JCT.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov

RE: 2025 State Transportation Package

Co-Chair Gorsek and McLain and members of the Joint Committee on Transportation:

I am writing on behalf of the City of Veneta, Oregon in support of the Oregon Legislature enhancing funding for Oregon Department of Transportation maintenance and operations and local government transportation safety projects in the 2025 Transportation Package. How?

First, act to stabilize Oregon's present and future transportation infrastructure. We are elected stewards for road infrastructure and we are failing our duty. Make tough decisions on enhancing revenues. Specifically,

- Index the state gas tax to inflation to calibrate operations and maintenance needs to construction costs.
- Start the transition to a Road User Fee to begin addressing less gas tax revenue due to more fuel-efficient vehicles using Oregon's roads.

Second, prioritize projects that make Oregon roads safer. For example, the Highway 126 Project (OR126 Project) from Veneta to Lakeside Drive will improve a key stretch of OR126 that connects the coast and valley. This project will invest in safety by significantly:

- Reducing serious and fatal injuries with roundabouts and emergency access shoulders,
- Relieving congestion and facilitating freight movement,
- Enhancing multimodal connectivity opportunities with bike lanes, and
- Increasing access to housing and jobs in Lane County. Veneta has been one of the fastest growing communities in Lane County over the last 20 years and is expected to be for the next 20 years.

There have been numerous crashes and fatalities on OR126 over the last ten years. **Three years ago in July, Amado Hernandez-Vernegas and Valente Domínguez died in a car crash at an intersection that the OR126 Project will address. This community needs this project.**

The project is a natural fit for this urban-adjacent community.

Sincerely,



Mayor Keith Weiss