

Michael Lee Auman
Interim Director
Oregon Travel Information Council



To: Members of the Joint Committee on Transportation

**From: Michael Lee Auman
Oregon Travel Information Council**

Date: August 28th, 2024

Re: Sustainable Funding for Safe, Well-Maintained, and Accessible Safety Rest Areas Throughout the State

Co-Chairs McClain and Gorsek and Members of the Committee,

Buckle up, the Legislative Session is almost here. Today you are meeting with Oregonians to determine what the transportation system priorities will be for the next fiscal biennium and beyond. Today you are faced with the question of what it means to have a fully operational transportation system, and today you'll hear about all the pressing needs of the Highway fund. As much as today's transportation system is about the need to move people, goods, and services from place to place, ignoring the need to do so safely would essentially mean a failure of the entire system.

Today's rest areas provide a much-needed place for motorists of all kinds to safely travel our beautiful state. Whether its tourists needing a quick break to use the restroom, get a jolt of caffeine, or stretch their legs, or a mandated requirement of the federal government for truckers to have a break, these rest areas are an essential part of the transportation system. In 2017, the legislature included funding for the Travel Information Council's operational and capital project needs for rest areas as part of a comprehensive transportation funding package (HB 2017). This legislation has served Oregon well and continued to provide yearly funding for the past eight years. With inflation in salaries, operational expenses, and capital project work, the amount provided in 2017 is no longer adequate to keep rest areas open.

While prior funding did allow for some capital projects work, it did not allow the Travel Information Council to address aging infrastructure in a way that would make rest areas comply with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). Today facilities are not ADA ready, are out of compliance with federal ADA requirements, and do not inclusively serve all people.

Today you'll hear about what it means to have a fully functional transportation system. Today the pressing needs of strained funding will be apparent, and today you'll need to ponder how to best use the resources provided to accomplish Oregonian's desire to move goods, services, and all people safely from point to point. I sincerely hope that future funding doesn't forget the seatbelt. Without it we're that much closer to a transportation system on life support. Seatbelts and rest areas save lives!

Truly,
Michael Lee Auman,
Interim Executive Director, TIC