

September 12, 2024

Jamie Collins
Meissner Nordic Ski Club
P.O. Box 2032
Bend, OR 97709-2032

Joint Committee on Transportation
Oregon State Legislature

Re: Public comment submitted in conjunction with 2024 JCT Listening Tour — Bend,
Oregon hearing at OSU Cascades

Dear Committee Members:

I am submitting the following statement on behalf of the Meissner Nordic Ski Club, of which I am a board member. Meissner Nordic Ski Club is the 501(c)(3) organization that conducts grooming and trail maintenance at Meissner Sno-Park on the Cascade Lakes Highway, about 14 miles west of Bend, under an agreement with the U.S. Forest Service. From December 1 to March 31 for over 25 years, we have groomed a 47-kilometer network that supports winter recreation opportunities for thousands of residents and visitors. Importantly, we provide this grooming and maintenance — as well as host high school races, community events, and other activities — without charging a dime for users. I want to emphasize that we rely exclusively on donations and grant support for our operations, distinguishing us from other organizations that groom similar ski areas in other National Forests.

The Legislature has some difficult choices before it this winter. I would urge to prioritize funding for winter road maintenance and snow clearance, as any reduction in these services on Cascade Lakes Highway will limit access to the outdoors for thousands, as well as put our user base at increased risk of winter driving accidents as they navigate the very busy traffic that uses the highway to access Mt. Bachelor and the rest of the Winter Recreation Area outside of Bend.

In addition, I would urge you not to cut funding for critical grant programs that support organizations like ours — only with grant funding are we able to support initiatives like this year's first-of-its-kind "ski bus" to Meissner. For a nominal user fee — which only offsets a small fraction of the cost — we will partner to run three round trips each weekend day from Bend up to the Sno-Park, taking cars off the road and reducing the climate impact of our activities.

Please consider the impact that cuts to either area would have on organizations like ours, and the winter outdoor recreation community in central Oregon generally.

I can be reached at james.r.collins@aya.yale.edu or (518) 488-9666 should you have any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jamie Collins". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "C".

Jamie Collins, Ph.D.
Board Member
Meissner Nordic Ski Club
Bend