

September 12, 2024

Good afternoon members of the joint legislative committee on transportation. My name is Susan Snyder and I live on a ranch SW of Condon.

I'm here to testify in support of our County Judge Cris Patnode and our County Roadmaster, Dewey Kennedy in opposition to the proposed closure of the Condon ODOT maintenance facility for the following reasons:

1. nasty winter weather, including dangerous blowing, drifting snow with white-out conditions makes winter driving hazardous.
2. Freezing fog reduces visibility during daylight hours and certainly at night especially if there is snow on the ground. Everything is white, no definition, difficult to tell exactly where road is. Plowing provides that definition.
3. Wildfire dangers – who will close impacted roads, direct traffic around closures, sweep debris off roads, etc.
4. We're 1 ½ hours from nearest hospital. Other than basic medical care, what if our ambulance can't get out to transport a child or a senior citizen to the hospital? Aircraft is not a reliable means of transportation due to weather including wind.
5. What about our school buses? Many of our students live in the rural regions of our county. The county road dept. keeps the county roads open but someone needs to keep our state highways, highway 19 and 206, open, ice-free and clear of blowing, drifting snow.
6. The same is true for our school activity buses. Just because the weather is cooperating when we leave for school or activities in the morning doesn't mean its still going to be ok that afternoon or evening.

Yes, ODOT has financial and budget issues. I do not think that charging travelers by the miles driven is ~~is~~ a good solution (it will kill the people living out here). Maybe if ODOT wasn't responsible for grafitti removal, homeless camp cleanup and building bike and hiking paths, they would have money for road maintenance! Bicycles don't pay a dime for using the existing roads or bike paths. I think everyone over 18 should have to pay an annual bike license fee – not excessive, maybe only \$20 or \$25 per year and that money should be contributed toward building & maintaining bike paths instead of using highway maintenance funds. Building new handicapped accessible sidewalks is an unnecessary expense. Yes they're important but not needed on every corner and have caused other problems such as limiting parking and causing flooding of businesses and unexpected icy spots on the sidewalks.

How do we get our produce to market? How do we get groceries, medicine and other supplies to our area? We have very little industry in the Condon area due to lack of water and lack of nearby transportation. Its mainly wheat, barley & livestock. This is only going to exerbate the situation.

What happens to the current crew? There is not a lot of jobs available in Gilliam County unless you want to drive to work on the state highway at the landfill near Arlington or get temporary work installing windmills or solar panels. How do those aready employed at the landfill get to work in the winter from Condon and Fossil? Unemployment pay only lasts so long, and its difficult to contact the state unemployment department. If you plan on transferring the current crew to another facility, you're not saving a bunch of money.

I've traveled 1 ½ hours to testify. This issue is very important to me. I live where I live by choice and should not be penalized for where I choose to live. Our family is the 7th generation to live in the Condon area. I have great, great grandparents buried in the local cemetery. I have also lived in Douglas County, Benton County and Tillamook County and we chose to move back to my family's farm to raise our family in 1966.

The Dalles has its own set of problems keeping up wih I-84 and Or 197. Having a maintenance facility in The Dalles which is 1 1/2 hours away, with totally different weather conditions is not going to work. Arlington is also busy with I-84 and Moro is busy with Hwy. 97 as is Bend. Spray, Maupin and Heppner also have many remote miles of state highway to maintain. The current system isn't perfect but the maintenance facilities are pretty well located to adequately take care of the current highway system. Im terribly tired of every time the state has a financial problem, Central and Eastern Oregon loose more services!

Thank you for listening. Susan Snyder

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