

County Commissioners
Kevin Cameron, Chair
Danielle Bethell
Colm Willis



Chief Administrative
Officer
Jan Fritz

MARION COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

September 24, 2024

Joint Committee on Transportation
900 Court Street NE, Room 453
Salem, OR, 97301

RE: Joint Committee on Transportation 2024 Roadshow

Co-Chairs Gorsek and McLain, and Members of the Joint Committee on Transportation,

The Marion County Board of Commissioners writes to express our sincere gratitude for granting our request to hold a Salem area meeting during the Joint Committee on Transportation 2024 Roadshow. We greatly appreciate your commitment to hearing from local communities regarding their transportation needs.

Commissioner Kevin Cameron had the privilege of attending the meeting on Tuesday, July 16th, in Albany and found it to be a valuable opportunity to discuss our region's transportation challenges and priorities. We look forward to further collaboration in ensuring the transportation infrastructure throughout the Marion County area is adequately supported.

As you are aware, Marion County is responsible for maintaining over 1,120 miles of roads and 140 bridges, many of which are in need of significant repair and upgrades. The challenges we face are amplified by the rising costs of construction and increasing regulatory demands. Contractor costs have risen by 40% in less than a year, and the growing scope of state and federal regulations continues to strain our budget.

Our top priority remains the maintenance and repair of our roads and bridges. We estimate that approximately \$125 million is needed to restore our nearly 1,000 miles of paved roads to good condition. In addition, over 80% of our 140 bridges are currently classified as being in poor or fair condition, requiring immediate attention to ensure public safety.

The State Highway Fund remains our most crucial source of funding, contributing 53% of our road department's budget. While the funding from House Bill 2017 has been helpful, it remains insufficient to fully address our growing infrastructure needs. Preserving the 50/30/20 distribution formula of the State Highway Fund, with counties receiving 30%, is vital for our continued ability to maintain critical infrastructure for our residents and visitors alike.

Marion County also faces unique transportation challenges, such as accommodating heavy agricultural and truck traffic, facilitating wildfire recovery efforts, and maintaining infrastructure for both urban and rural communities. The financial pressures brought by these factors,

combined with inflation and regulatory requirements, have made it increasingly difficult to keep pace with needed improvements.

To address these issues, we believe that exploring stable and diverse funding mechanisms is essential. We also ask that you maintain the 30% county share of the State Highway Fund and continue supporting local revenue sources that will allow us to preserve and improve our transportation network.

Counties like Marion are integral partners with the state in maintaining a safe and reliable transportation system for all Oregonians. We remain committed to working with the Legislature to develop a comprehensive transportation funding package that emphasizes the importance of safety, maintenance, and operational improvements.

Thank you once again for your attention to these critical issues, and we look forward to continued collaboration to ensure that Oregon's transportation system remains strong and effective.

Sincerely,



Kevin Cameron
Chair

Danielle Bethell
Commissioner

Colm Willis
Commissioner