

September 25, 2024

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

Re: Transportation Accountability, Transparency, and Funding Mechanisms

Dear Co-Chairs McLain and Gorsek and members of the Committee,

As you develop a transportation funding package for the 2025 Legislature, I encourage you to include clear direction to prioritize and direct funding to our most important transportation goals: (1) operations and maintenance of the existing system, and (2) significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions from transportation.

This direction is needed because our existing plans and processes result in spending on a handful of very large projects which are financially unsound and that undermine achieving the state's climate goals:

- Adopted plans include dozens of large, extremely expensive highway expansion projects that we cannot afford, that will not reduce congestion and that will undermine our climate goals by promoting increased car travel and diverting resources that should be spent on actions to reduce emissions. Plans call for more than 4 dozen big highway projects that are estimated to cost a total \$10-20 billion.
- Our planning process dramatically underestimates the cost of big highway projects, rejects affordable solutions, and fails to consider the additional travel and emissions induced by such projects.

To address these problems, the package should include measures that:

- Require that ODOT and the Transportation Commission give priority to basic maintenance and operations -including fixing potholes, pavement maintenance, striping and snow plowing - as it adopts or amends the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).
- Delay or postpone funding of major highway expansion projects in or near metropolitan areas until we have plans in place to reduce emissions and are making real progress in meeting emissions goals.

Thank you for your work and considering these suggestions.

Sincerely,

Robert Cortright
Retired Transportation Planner, Salem