

To: Joint Committee on Transportation

From: James Anderson

Date: 9/28/24

RE: SEIU ODOT Members and Transportation Roadshow

Dear Co-Chair McLain, Co-Chair Gorsek, Vice Co-Chair Boquist, Vice Co-Chair Boshart Davis and members of the committee,

My name is James Anderson, I am a member of SEIU Local 503 and an ODOT worker out of Klamath Falls. I am writing to provide public comment on ODOT's budget and how it impacts workers who show up every day to ensure Oregonians can move safely on our highways.

With the budget crisis, we have been hearing lots about the major projects in metro areas and how they are finding ways to see them through. We understand the importance of those projects and needs of the large metro areas but the small rural areas are feeling forgotten about and that their needs are some how less important.

I believe our ODOT shop is probably the same as most with concerns about the budget. We feel the community is feeling the impact already and has great concerns of highway safety and especially in winter the ability to get to and from medical facilities, grocery stores, work etc. Local Emergency Services also have the same concerns during winter months and how it affects their responses to emergencies.

In the rural areas ODOT is the lifeblood that helps communities thrive and be able to compete day to day tasks. Emergency services depend greatly on ODOT's ability to keep essential routes open and clear of hazards so they can respond quickly and safely. Not maintaining lower priority highways could potentially mean life or death for rural communities. The level of service provided to all highways affects everyone in one way or another. From community members just travel for leisure to power companies trying to restore vital infrastructure after a storm. The ODOT crews in these small communities are feeling the pain and pressure by possibly not being able to help the communities they deeply care about and take a lot of pride being a very important and essential cog in the wheel that keeps our communities running.

ODOT workers care deeply about the safety of Oregonians and our state highway system. As members of the communities that we serve, road safety is our imperative because our communities are relying on us to keep them safe regardless of what mother nature throws at us.

Thank you,

James