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August 20, 2025

TO: Senator Suzanne Weber, SD 16
Representative Cyrus Javadi, HD 32

Dear Senator Weber and Representative Javadi,

In light of the Special Legislative Session convened by Governor Kotek at the end of August 2025 to address transportation issues, we would like to share our position with you.

As residents of Tillamook County, you are well aware of the vital lifeline Hwy 6 represents for our community, as well as the importance of Highways 101, 26, 18 and 22. Many of our residents frequently travel Hwy 6 for shopping, medical appointments and treatment, and family events. The housing shortage has resulted in an estimated 2,000 workers commuting daily from outside our county for employment, the majority of them over Hwy 6. Tillamook's signature business has estimated that a closure of Hwy 6 would result in an additional cost of at least \$66,000 each week since trucks would need to be diverted over Hwy 26.

ODOT's financial situation did not come as a surprise, but was years in the making. You know better than most how many times you have heard of the need for additional funding so that road maintenance can be sustained. Federal grants may pay for capital projects, but we must maintain our infrastructure ourselves. The funding for maintenance has not kept up with inflation over the years, nor has it been sustained as vehicles become more fuel efficient. It is important to emphasize that the blame does not (and should not) rest solely on electric vehicles and hybrids. All vehicles, from the smallest motorcycle to the largest truck, operate more efficiently than they did when the fuel tax was introduced over a century ago.

We recognize that the proposed 6-cent per gallon increase in the fuel tax (in addition to other fee increases) is not a solution for all our woes, but rather a bandaid that will allow ODOT to continue maintenance activities at levels close to the current ones. While none of us are happy to pay additional taxes and fees, we also recognize the consequences of non-action, including:

- The decreased maintenance of the roads which keep our community connected, and economically viable;
- A drastic reduction in not only planners and engineers, but also of the maintenance workers who run the snowplows, spread sand and gravel, fix potholes, install and replace signs, respond to crashes, cut back vegetation, and all the other important daily tasks;
- The elimination of the Rose Lodge (Otis) maintenance station, requiring the Tillamook crew to cover more area with fewer resources;
- The elimination of an entire drawbridge team, which keeps shipping lanes open for commerce;

- Demoting Hwy 6 to a Class D road, which will impact us negatively, and cause undue consternation for hundreds, perhaps thousands of families daily;
- Increased response times, crashes and accidents, and potentially fatalities, the numbers of which we may not know for years.

It is in times like these that there is a dire need not only for representation, but for leadership and statesmanship.

We urge you to stand up for the needs of all your constituents in Tillamook County, and support the 6-cent-per-gallon fuel tax increase so that Tillamook County may remain an economically viable community, not one delegated to the bleachers as we watch our main arterial roads collapse.

Thank you.


On behalf of the Tillamook County Democratic Central Committee


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