

August 22, 2025

Co-Chairs Wagner and Fahey, Vice-Chairs Bonham and Drazan, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of LC 2. My name is Tesmond Hurd and I've worked as an ODOT Transportation Maintenance Specialist in La Grande for 7 years. Transportation doesn't work without me and my colleagues there to respond to crashes, wildfires, snow storms, fix asphalt, repair culverts, mitigate erosion on shoulders, rebuild guardrail, and everything else we do almost 365 days a year.

Not funding ODOT will have dire consequences for Oregonians—especially in rural and mountainous areas. I have first-hand experience witnessing the true results of ODOT's dwindling maintenance funds. Without this funding snow removal on major mountain passes—like I-84 between Pendleton and Ontario—will be significantly delayed; lane-blocking crashes will face longer response times; preventative maintenance will be neglected, allowing small issues to escalate into safety hazards; aging equipment will continue to be costlier to maintain, decreasing our efficiency; and, most importantly, a significant portion of ODOT's workforce will lose their jobs and livelihood. In rural areas like mine, there are no other options for careers that pay people a livable wage, and certainly not with all the benefits that make this job attractive for good, dedicated, and talented individuals.

ODOT crews like mine are available 24/7, 365 days a year, responding to anything that impacts our state highways. We are deeply committed to our work and the communities we serve. We give up birthdays, holidays, nights, weekends, and time with family to respond to winter storms, crashes, landslides, wildfires, downed trees—even helping stranded travelers change their tires or get fuel. We take pride in the work we do, because we live here too. We want our friends, family, and neighbors to have safe and functional routes in their daily lives.

This special session and the funding that is being proposed from it is a critical step toward ensuring Oregon's roads are maintained at the standard they should be—and the level Oregonians deserve. Our state's vast and diverse economy depends on it. So does our quality of life. In rural Eastern Oregon, highways are often the only connection between communities, with few alternate routes.

Please vote in support of this proposal and invest in ODOT to keep Oregon safe and moving forward.

Thank you,

Tesmond Hurd