

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 Cari Catlow and I've worked 2.5 years as an IS Specialist, and 12 years total as a system and business analyst with ODOT. Information systems and customers require solutions to support the dozens of systems that enable highway project construction management, maintenance, and analysis. IS specialists have in-depth knowledge of the software application development and related problem solving, experience with the business processes supported by the systems, and compliance with state and federal reporting requirements. Most systems share data at some level which requires IS specialists information. IS developers and IS specialists are not interchangeable.

Project Delivery and Operations staff have participated in cost reduction efforts since the flattening of state funding forecast in 2018-2019. Since then, we have already sacrificed many positions and reassigned that work to the remaining/decreasing available staff. Many of the systems we support are 20+ years old. There have been no funds to upgrade them, and in some cases the coding is so old we can no longer hire developers with those skills. If we lose our co-workers with system specific knowledge, there will be no available replacements. This will especially be a problem when we have no funding for new systems. Problem resolution and workarounds will be less effective, and more time-consuming for the remaining staff. Statewide project delivery will falter without reliable information systems.

We have worried about our job security since the budget forecast was submitted to the governor in summer 2024. This year it has increased as we wait for funding. Now, after the layoffs and bumping conclude, we face a three-month process of dismantling our teams and changing jobs involuntarily. Our scheduled work will be re-prioritized, and some of us could be transferred to "similar" positions in other departments for "resource balancing" (i.e., replacing the subject matter experts who were laid off). And then more layoffs are expected in January because whatever happens in the special session will only be a stop-gap measure for continued lack of income. I've loved my work at ODOT, but the increasing stress is taking a toll on my health. It may force me into early retirement.

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

Thank you,

Cari Catlow