

August 25, 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 Jeff Lee and I've worked as an ODOT Transportation Maintenance Specialist 2 for 8 years. Our routine maintenance activities not only provide safe roads for the public but are also proactively preventing unsafe conditions. Not only do we provide road maintenance, we also clear drains, cut landscape areas, repair guardrails, remove hazardous trees, maintain bike lanes, respond to accidents/emergencies, assist with police/fire department and provide winter operations. Each task is essential in keeping the roads safe for the traveling public, including keeping safe passage for first responders and commerce.

By keeping drains cleared and maintained, this prevents high water situations on the roadway causing unsafe conditions. By repairing guardrail, this prevents vehicles from crossover/head on collisions and from dangerous obstacles off the roadway. We mow and brush cut landscape areas to prevent vehicle exhaust or trailer chain sparks from causing wildfires, also to clear speed and other highway warning signs and to expose areas where criminal activity can occur. We maintain safe bike lanes on bike paths for the many bicyclists on our roadways. We are proactively identifying and removing hazardous trees along our roadways before they fall onto our highways causing harm to the public. We cover the police and fire departments when they are in the lanes on closures. In order to perform these activities, we need employees to operate equipment to keep ODOT and the public safe. Our work zones are on the highways where we are inches away from fast moving traffic and around dangerous conditions. We take pride in our work and are an important cog in the transportation system.

Having a fully funded ODOT is important because of all the activities we perform. We are a major part of the transportation system. Maintenance and Operations has many skilled employees often switching from task to task throughout the day seamlessly. In order to perform the work safely, we need positions filled in order to accomplish this. Every activity that we perform on or along the highways requires employees to operate equipment. For example when we use street sweepers to sweep the highways: this requires 2 street sweepers, 1 haul away (10 yd dump truck), 2-3 follow vehicles for safety and a rewarding vehicle behind the sweeping operation. It takes many skilled workers in order to perform just this one activity. This activity is important because it removes hazardous debris from the highways causing damage to vehicles, including emergency vehicles moving past traffic. All of our activities require advanced training to perform the task safely and efficiently. Over the past few years, we have already been "doing more with less", it has been difficult to maintain our roads properly and safely because of our crew being short staffed. We have also been performing "cheaper" tasks and not maintaining the level of service that my job requires to maintain a safe and functioning road system.

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

Thank you,

Jeff Lee