

August 25, 2025

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of LC 2. My name is Perry Gibson and I've worked as an ODOT Transportation Maintenance Specialist 2 for 10 years. As a TMS2, my primary responsibility is ensuring that Oregon's highways, bridges, and roadways remain safe, reliable, and open for the traveling public. This work is not just about fixing potholes or plowing snow—it is about protecting lives. Every day, we respond to emergencies such as snowstorms, floods, rockslides, or crashes. In many cases, we are the first responders who clear hazards and reopen critical routes so that ambulances, firefighters, and law enforcement can reach those in need.

The work we do also has a direct impact on Oregon's economy. Our transportation system is the backbone of commerce—agriculture, timber, manufacturing, and tourism all depend on reliable roadways to move goods and connect people. When we keep roads open and maintained, we are supporting local businesses, supply chains, and jobs across the state.

We also serve as environmental stewards. Whether maintaining drainage systems, preventing erosion, or applying herbicides responsibly, we protect Oregon's rivers, wildlife habitats, and farmland. Preventative maintenance also saves taxpayer dollars by addressing small issues before they become large and costly problems.

Finally, in times of crisis—wildfires, winter storms, and other disasters—ODOT maintenance crews provide a lifeline for communities. We keep evacuation routes open, ensure emergency supplies can get through, and help connect rural Oregonians to hospitals, schools, and essential services.

Oregon cannot function without its roads, and those roads cannot function without the men and women who maintain them. As a TMS2, I take pride in this responsibility and urge you to recognize the critical role we play in keeping our state safe, connected, and resilient.

A fully funded ODOT ensures that our transportation system—the lifeline of our state—remains safe and reliable. Maintenance workers like myself are responsible for keeping highways, bridges, and roads clear, open, and safe for the public. When we have the resources and staffing we need, we can perform preventative maintenance that reduces costs long-term, respond quickly to emergencies, and protect lives by keeping routes open for first responders, families, and businesses.

Layoffs threaten this mission. At my worksite, reduced staffing means fewer people to cover the same miles of roadway. That will lead to slower snow removal in the winter, longer response times to crashes or hazards, and deferred maintenance on potholes, guardrails, culverts, and

drainage systems. Instead of addressing issues early, we will be forced to react only when conditions become critical—putting the public at greater risk and increasing costs to taxpayers.

The impacts are not limited to my worksite. Across the state, layoffs would stretch crews thin, leaving entire rural communities more vulnerable during wildfires, floods, and winter storms. Oregon's economy also depends on safe and open roads. Every delay in freight movement, every closure of a critical route, and every unsafe roadway has a ripple effect on businesses, tourism, and local jobs.

For crew members that are getting layoff notices, this means uncertainty for their livelihoods and the ability to provide for their family. For me and my coworkers not getting laid off, this means more stress, more overtime, and fewer hands to do essential work. For the public, it means slower service, less reliability, and higher risks on the roads they travel every day.

In short, Oregon cannot afford an underfunded ODOT. Our roads, our economy, and our communities depend on the work we do, and without adequate funding and staffing, we cannot meet the needs of the state.

I urge you to prioritize full funding for ODOT so that we can continue to keep Oregon safe, connected, and strong.

Thank you,

Perry Gibson