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On Behalf Of:
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Funding
Measure, Appointment or LC 2
Topic:

While ODOT has at times over designed some facilities and may be slightly over staffed the vast majority of actual waste is the responsibility of politicians. Specifically those that can't make a decision and stick with it. If legislators want to improve efficiency of transportation spending they need to start with a hard look in the mirror. How many times has the Columbia river bridge been designed? Who decided the rose quarter freeway needed a roof? How many times has ODOT converted to metric measures and then been forced to reverse course? How many legislators brag about funding a sidewalk project in their district on ODOT's nickel? Money wasted on bike paths? Law says spend 1% on ped and bike facilities. Not ODOT's idea for sure but let me tell you a short story. My agency was considering a major highway in Northern Marion County. So how to meet the 1% requirement? We surveyed local farmers and found the widest equipment that needed to go down that road. "Bike Path" is wide enough to accommodate that equipment. And yeah, bike riders like it too, but wasted spending? I don't think so! And let's not forget what the gas tax would be today if it had kept up with even consumer inflation over the years since say 1960. Answer is more than a third higher than it is. And for counties the income from federal forests has also dried up. You can't expect roads like 1960 on half the money we were spending in 1960.

One more point, on Electric Vehicles. In short, we need them for climate reasons. Tax them for roads, yes, but then find a way to make them cheaper than gas powered vehicles and then stay out of the way. One suggestion; shut down the passenger rail service which few use in Oregon anyway and use that money to build out and standardize a charging system, especially on the major highways. And find a way to allow power companies like PGE to be profitable enough to keep up with the demand without frying the planet.