

Submitter: L M

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Interim Committee On Transportation
Funding

Measure, Appointment or
Topic: LC 2

I am an employee at the Oregon Department of Transportation. I'm writing to express my support for the legislature to pass the LC2 Bill that will provide funding to ODOT to prevent layoffs. As you well know, these layoffs will affect the lives of over 400 people (and their families), as well as hundreds and hundreds of lives in the future as ODOT has to make additional spending cuts. This not only will cause suffering for everyone laid off (there are simply not that many jobs in Oregon for all of the skilled workers who will be laid off, and I believe many people will have to travel out of state to support themselves and their families), but it quite frankly will destroy the state's infrastructure. This will be a complete brain drain of expertise and knowledge for the agency that we not get back for decades if the full two rounds of layoffs happen.

Initially, the roads and bridges will deteriorate because all of the maintenance and operations people were laid off. There will be no one to fix potholes, fix damaged and deteriorating bridges, and rescue all of the people that get stuck in the Gorge in the snow during the winter. Then will come a wave of project cancellations because ODOT will not have the staff to work on all of them. These projects are not just the big-budget flashy projects that the general public is so concerned about. They are local agency projects - I for example work on a lot of projects for Marion County, building and fixing their bridges - and they are also smaller scale safety upgrades and bridge rehabilitation projects. I also work on one project in Clackamas County where we are upgrading an intersection because there have been countless deaths from collisions. That is really important work that we do. There are structures that the average person doesn't even know aren't up to safety standards, and we are working to fix them.

There is also misinformation that money can be reallocated from the big-budget projects to save the employees jobs, and that ODOT is holding the taxpayer hostage by threatening layoffs. That is factually not true. Money for the Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan comes primarily from Federal funding and cannot be reallocated. I am positive that our leadership has communicated that, but I still see this fake news being spread around. Trust me - I'm just as pissed at our leadership as a private citizen. The director's office is responsible for the situation we are in, not the employees. Truly everyone I work with tries their best every day and we are so busy. We love our jobs. We are not lazy bureaucrats. We make change and we, as individuals, make Oregon's infrastructure a little bit better every single day.

Please pass the LC2 Bill - there is no reason to destroy hundreds of lives and

Oregon's roads in order to make a point about ODOT's spending. Hold our leadership accountable instead, and trust that we will continue to do the best that we can every day.