

Dear Representatives,

To begin, I want to pose a few questions: Who plows and sands the highways during the Winter, allowing safe travel for Oregonians? Who fixes the dangerous potholes that wear on our cars? Who deals with emergency landslides and repairs culvert washouts? Who mows the dry grass along highways to help prevent fires? The answer is ODOT maintenance workers. Much of the funding package being considered for ODOT goes directly to these important people and their work.

Now let me outline a hypothetical situation: Your constituents want to travel over the mountains to visit family and vice versa for the holidays. A giant snowstorm sweeps in and the depleted maintenance workforce is unable to keep up with plowing the roads, leaving travel unsafe or impossible. No vacation to Central Oregon. No visit to Portland for shopping and fun. No trip to the mountain to ski. No visit with the relatives for the holidays. Maybe even stuck in traffic in the cold behind a wreck indefinitely. It's bad for business, bad for commerce, bad for the people, bad for Oregon.

Not so long ago, transportation projects had bi-partisan support. Why is that? It is because a safe and reliable road system is used and supported by all Oregonians. It supports commerce. It is crucial for the well-being of our State.

I consider myself a realistic person. I don't like taxes either. To be clear, this is not a large tax increase. The tax increases will not break the bank for most families. These taxes are largely in-line with our neighboring states. The fact is that funding full maintenance of our highways now will help prevent deterioration, and thus higher cost projects to fix them in the future.

Let us all think about the greater good here. Jobs, road maintenance, good business, happy drivers, safety. If people are unhappy about the cost of living, that is a separate issue. This is a must-pass bill for Oregonians.

Thank you for your concern and support.

A.M.

Concerned Oregonian