

Submitter: Barry Tanaka
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Interim Committee On Transportation
Funding
Measure, Appointment or Topic: LC 2

Hello,

Thank you for taking this written testimony. I appreciate the effort and time that legislators put into their work. As a tax paying citizen and ODOT employee, I am asking that ODOT be fully funded, and especially, that funding mechanisms (e.g., the gas tax) be indexed to inflation. In my opinion, a package that funds ODOT without allowing for future increases in funding tied to inflation merely "kicks the can down the road".

I can say from a personal perspective that I have been strongly impacted by proposed layoffs. Starting last August of 2024, when a preliminary layoff list was circulated, I began looking for other employment opportunities. More recently in July when layoffs were announced and I received a layoff notice; I began reaching out to other agencies and consulting firms. The layoff notice has had tremendous impact on my family in the form of concerns for our financial wellbeing as well as our family health (my job provides health benefits for our family). My experience is multiplied across 450-plus other individuals working at ODOT.

My work includes delivering vital pedestrian/cyclist safety programs; the funding crisis has put this work on hold as we have been asked to stop work to deliver these projects. As a result of funding crisis, vulnerable users of the transportation system are being denied protections (e.g., increased illumination at crossings, protected crossings, traffic dividers, etc.) that they need to safely utilize ODOT managed streets and highways.

From an organizational perspective, the budget crisis has resulted in a significant loss of productivity as employees spend time and energy coping with or navigating layoff stresses. The agency will take years to recover from the staff's loss of moral and faith in the organization.

This is a created crisis that can be avoided. Please do the hard (and possibly unpopular) work of fully funding our organization now and into the future. All Oregonians benefit from a functioning transportation system. I am proud to contribute to the operation of the highway system on behalf of all of my fellow Oregonians.

Thank you for your hard work and I hope that this testimony is helpful for your understanding of this issue.

Best regards,

Barry Tanaka, M.S., P.E.

(Resident Engineer for Maintenance and Hydraulic Engineer)