

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

Hello Elected Representatives,

I work as a Hydraulic Engineer for the Oregon Department of Transportation. My daily work includes completing designs for civil engineering projects, reviewing work we outsource to consultants, reviewing permits for construction along state highways, and assisting our Maintenance forces to provide technical solutions to any variety of issues that arise. I am proud to work for the people of Oregon, and I believe in public service. Each day I prioritize safety in my work. I design and review projects with longevity and maintenance in mind. I also know that it is my responsibility to be a good steward of taxpayer dollars in the projects that I design and review.

Due to the failure to pass a transportation bill, many of my colleagues are facing layoff notices. This has turned our agency upside-down. We are now challenged to do our job because we are missing key teammates in all areas. These people have training, insider knowledge, and technical expertise that cannot be replaced. Projects to maintain roads and to improve safety for Oregonians are going to be delayed or cancelled.

Most critically, a large portion of our Maintenance staff is facing layoffs. These are the folks that respond to emergencies on the highway. When a lane of a bridge is blocked by debris or a section of guardrail on an interstate is destroyed by a crash, they come and fix it, both quickly and affordably. They mow grass to prevent fires in the summer and plow snowy roads in the winter. Eliminating these jobs is an immediate safety issue for all Oregonians.

Funding our Department of Transportation properly is a choice. We can choose to prioritize public safety. We can choose to properly fund our public sector. This means continuing to employ people who care about Oregonians, their safety, and their future. In the short term, losing funding has serious safety issues. In the longer term, cutting these jobs means that more work will be outsourced to the private sector for profit, and some will not be done at all. Continuing to cut ODOT employees will mean less expertise within the department. We need expertise to properly do and to review work on behalf of Oregonians. That is efficient use of taxpayer dollars.

Having a meaningful conversation about funding and making hard choices is your job and it is why we elected you. The people of ODOT do their job everyday serving the people of this state, often understaffed. Please do your job and pass a transportation

bill that allows us to continue our work of keeping Oregonians safe and building and maintaining a 21st century transportation system.

Thank you.