



**Office of Mayor Scott Keyser**

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August 22, 2025

Senator Fred Girod and Members of the Senate  
Representative Rick Lewis and Members of the House  
Special Session Committee  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR

RE: OPPOSING THE ODOT BAILOUT AND GUBERNATORIAL CONTROL OF GAS TAX INCREASES

Dear Sirs,

As Mayor of Molalla, I am compelled to address the serious concerns I have regarding the proposed bailout of the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and the prospect of granting the Governor's office unilateral authority over future Gas Tax increases. On behalf of the residents and businesses of Molalla, I urge you to reconsider these measures, which I believe undermine local autonomy, transparency, and responsible fiscal stewardship across our State.

The people of Molalla, like Oregonians across the State, expect their tax dollars to be managed with transparency and discipline. The proposed ODOT bailout sends the wrong signal, rewarding years of mismanagement and inefficient spending rather than demanding necessary reforms. With community needs mounting in public safety, education, and infrastructure, we cannot justify diverting millions toward an agency that has yet to demonstrate meaningful accountability for its deficits. We should hold ODOT to the same standards we expect of our local governments, which must balance their budgets without the luxury of bailouts.

Even more troubling is the proposal to place future Gas Tax decisions solely in the hands of the Governor's office. Raising or allocating Gas Taxes is a decision with far-reaching consequences for families, small businesses, and local governments. Removing these decisions from legislative oversight and public debate would erode the foundation of local representation and transparent governance that Oregonians value.

The voices of our communities must not be sidelined. Gas Tax policy should be shaped through open deliberation with direct input from local leaders and residents who know best the challenges and opportunities facing our roads, transit networks, and neighborhoods. Concentrating this power at the executive level undermines the democratic process and risks disconnecting Statewide policy from local realities.

My recommendations for reform are as follows:

- Commission an independent and public audit of ODOT to pinpoint inefficiencies and chart a clear path toward sustainable operations—before considering any additional public funding.

- Maintain legislative oversight and local government input for any and all Gas Tax proposals, ensuring that any increases or revenue allocations reflect broad consensus and concrete benefit to communities like Molalla.
- Prioritize transportation investments that address the needs of rural and underserved areas, emphasizing public transit, safety, and infrastructure maintenance over costly expansions.
- Promote robust public engagement and transparency in all major transportation funding decisions.

As Mayor, my duty is to ensure that the people of Molalla have a voice in decisions that will shape our community's future. I urge you to reject the ODOT bailout as currently proposed and to oppose any attempt to centralize Gas Tax authority. Instead, let us work together to strengthen accountability, empower local communities, and secure a sustainable, equitable transportation future for all Oregonians.

Sincerely,

*Scott Keyser*

Scott Keyser  
Mayor of Molalla