



# Clatsop County

## Board of Commissioners

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August 29, 2025

Joint Interim Committee on Transportation Funding  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

### **RE: Support for HB 3991 – Stabilizing Oregon’s Transportation Future**

Co-Chairs Wagner and Fahey, Co-Vice-Chairs Bonham and Drazan, and Members of the Committee,

The Clatsop County Board of Commissioners supports key provisions of House Bill 3991 and urges its passage, recognizing the urgent need to stabilize Oregon’s transportation system. While no one welcomes tax increases, this legislation takes necessary short-term steps to address the current crisis, protect essential services, and begin the work of rebuilding public trust in the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT).

#### **PRESERVING THE 50/30/20 DISTRIBUTION FORMULA**

We strongly support maintaining Oregon’s longstanding 50/30/20 formula for distributing State Highway Fund revenues. This formula has provided predictability and balance for decades, ensuring that cities and counties receive a stable share of funding to maintain local roads and bridges. For a rural county like Clatsop, with limited revenue options but significant responsibilities for local transportation infrastructure, preserving this formula is essential to sustaining safe and reliable connections for our residents and businesses.

#### **SUSTAINING RURAL TRANSIT THROUGH STIF**

Sunset Empire Transportation District is our local public transit provider, and like many transit agencies in rural areas, it remains under-resourced despite providing lifeline services that connect people to jobs, health care, and education. While we believe strongly that new or increased taxes are a last resort, the funding crisis facing rural transit has become so severe that we support a modest increase in the employee payroll tax, from 0.1% to 0.2%, to ensure the Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) can provide stable, sustainable support for rural transit agencies.

#### **ADDRESSING THE DISPROPORTIONATE SHARE OF ODOT LAYOFFS IN CLATSOP COUNTY**

Without passage of HB 3991, ODOT will face more layoffs, on top of the hundreds that have already occurred. Maintenance District 1, covering Clatsop, Columbia, Tillamook, and western Washington counties, has lost nearly 30% of its staff, 15 positions in total, 11 of which were in Clatsop County. This disproportionate loss threatens the upkeep of coastal highways that are lifelines for residents, visitors, and commerce. As we urge passage of this funding package, we also call on ODOT to prioritize restoring positions in communities like Clatsop County that have shouldered the greatest burden.

## **PRIORITIZING CAPITAL PROJECTS TO DEMONSTRATE FISCAL STEWARDSHIP**

For any transportation funding package to achieve its intended goals, it is essential that ODOT demonstrates practical and transparent fiscal stewardship. A key part of this is reviewing its capital project portfolio, establishing clear criteria to prioritize the most critical projects, particularly those with direct safety and community impacts, and allocating resources accordingly. We urge the Legislature and Governor to hold ODOT accountable for reprioritizing capital projects. This is a standard expectation for public agencies; when faced with funding shortfalls, agencies carefully review and adjust priorities to focus resources on the most critical projects. By taking these steps, ODOT can ensure that limited capital project resources are used effectively, strengthen public confidence, and deliver tangible results.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY, COLLABORATION, AND THE PATH FORWARD**

We appreciate that HB 3991 includes mechanisms to increase accountability for ODOT; an important step in rebuilding public trust. However, accountability alone cannot solve Oregon's structural funding challenges. A long-term, comprehensive funding solution must be developed ahead of the 2027 legislative session, and that will require both state and local partners to remain engaged and committed to working with each other to right-size the ship.

Oregonians deserve a transportation system that is safe, reliable, transparent, and sustainable. The Clatsop County Board of Commissioners stands ready to support these efforts and to partner with you in building a transportation system that serves every community in Oregon.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Mark Kujala, Chair  
Clatsop County Board of Commissioners