

Good afternoon,

My name is Donna Ferry and I've worked for ODOT for 17yrs. I started with the original Major Projects Branch working on the OTIA III Program and State Radio Project. For the last 10 years, I've been working on the Engineering Automation and e-Construction teams. The roadmap for our team's work is transforming the old and not reliable paper process of construction project contract administration from the estimating costs and time phase thru the construction process, to a data driven platform providing one source of truth enabling ODOT to report findings to the Oregon Legislature and Federal Highway Administration with more accuracy, accountability, and transparency.

Contrary to recent media reporting that some feel ODOT doesn't know how to build things anymore because we're too busy trying to be the social justice warriors, too busy trying to be all things to all people on climate, our work is not based on cherry picking "fun" stuff. Our work is based on the accountability and reporting requirements both the Oregon Legislature and the Federal Highway Administration have deemed ODOT to be responsible for, reporting requirements that those on this committee are well aware of and have delegated to ODOT.

For the last 5 years our team has worked to implement AASHTOWare Project, created by AASHTO, the American Association of Highway Transportation Officials, and this just went live in October of 2024. This platform helps make sure every dollar and every hour is used the right way. It also helps catch problems early, so projects don't get delayed or go over budget. Having all of our construction project data, from estimation thru construction, in one platform, makes it easier and faster to share accurate information with the Oregon Legislature and the Federal Highway Administration. In short, our team helps make construction projects more accurate, responsible, and follows the rules, just what the legislature and Oregonians are asking for.

By using data and technology, we plan projects better and save money. Using data driven technology is also part of the governor's initiative. This helps build trust with the public because they can see that their tax money is being spent carefully and honestly.

This platform also replaces our aging disparate systems that are no longer maintainable.

We currently have over 1K internal ODOT, and external consultants, prime contractors, subcontractors, and materials suppliers working in AASHTOWare Project. Many more users will begin using the system as we ramp up from our initial launch.

Our team of 6 plus a handful of subject matter experts also provides all of the customer support for our AASHTOWare Project users AND all of the training for each user.

After 17 years with ODOT and working for the last 10 years on something I'm so passionate about, creating efficiency and accountability, I received my layoff notification on July 7th.

Being a small powerhouse of a team, we can't afford to lose anyone and now my team will have even more pressure on them to support all of our external partners like Consultants, Prime Contractors, Sub-Contractors, Materials suppliers, and even trucking firms working on construction projects throughout the state.

Here are a few of the impacts to Oregonians with staff reductions on our team.

1. **Less Accountability:** Without our data tools, it would be harder to track how money and time are spent. This could lead to mistakes, waste, or even misuse of funds without anyone noticing. Something we all, including you, are trying to avoid.
2. **More Errors and Delays:** Without accurate, real-time data, project estimates could be wrong. This means projects might take longer and cost more than planned. Again, something everyone is trying to avoid.
3. **Harder Reporting:** Meeting the rules set by OR lawmakers and the FHWA would take much more time and effort. Reports might be less accurate or late, risking fines or loss of funding.
4. **Less Transparency:** Without clear data and reporting, the public and government officials wouldn't have full trust that projects are done fairly and properly, one of your concerns that's been brought up repeatedly over the last year.
5. **More Costs:** Mistakes, delays, and poor planning can lead to wasted money, which ultimately means taxpayers would pay more, **exactly what we're here trying to avoid!**

In short, without this team and the technology we implement and support, construction projects would be less efficient, more expensive, and less trustworthy.

In addition, ODOT staff are not some extreme, radical alien race sent here from another planet. We're tax payers and we're **your** constituents too! While I don't want higher taxes either, it's definitely the lesser of two evils. My sister is a disabled veteran, and I am her caregiver. Because of federal cuts to VA services and staffing, I now need to drive from Salem to the Portland VA for her medical needs. I dread thinking what this is going to be like this winter. If anyone has been to the Portland VA, while a beautiful drive and campus, it's not safe on non-maintained roads in the winter.

ODOT's maintenance workers are true **heroes**! They're first responders in weather emergencies like fires and winter storms. They're most often the first responders in traffic incidents. They help you fix your flat, give you gas, or call for help when you're on the side of the road. How dare these heroes who have been there to help so many Oregonians, be so disrespected. They live in remote areas and work 24/7 so you can get to the hospital during inclement weather. They keep the roads clear so food and supply deliveries can get to your rural stores. They literally save lives and are being treated like disposable pawns that don't matter. This is unacceptable and shame on each of you for your part in this partisan bickering. This is not a political game! Human lives are literally at stake.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my ODOT experience with you. I'm begging you to please put your partisanship aside; to use this moment to exhibit integrity; to be the leaders whose actions actually match your declarations of caring for all Oregonians and use this information to educate yourselves and your constituents about the ramifications of a smaller ODOT and less safe Oregon. I challenge each and every one of you to **work together** to resolve this funding issue, just like my team and I must work together to resolve problems and to research and implement tools that provide efficiency, transparency, and accuracy. This is not a perfect bill but it's the start to what could become perfect by each of you working together to make an equitable bill happen in future sessions. Thank you for your time.