

# February 2026

# Move Oregon Forward

## “Best Practices”

### Committee Bills

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# **SB 1542 + SB 1542 Goals**



- **Learn + borrow from other states**
- **Bring solutions with low / no fiscal**
- **Build on past work, and update what needs refinement**
- **Build more trust between ODOT, the public, the OTC, and the legislature**
- **More clearly delegate responsibilities**
- **Give ODOT better tools to address common issues**

# SB 1542 + SB 1542 Overview



- **SB 1542: “Measure What You Drive”**

⇒ Track it, compare it, fix it

- **SB 1543: “Guardrails for Good Governance”**

⇒ Close gaps and clean up transpo. debt practices

*They work better together!*

## **Measure What We Drive (SB 1542)**

# **Why does it matter?**



### **Problem?**

Oregonians are waiting for safer streets and reliable bridges, but those needs are often put on hold for new projects we haven't even priced out yet. Our transportation plans aren't consistently lining up with our priorities, and we don't have a good system to measure if we are meeting our goals.

### **Why is that happening?**

Decisions about what transportation projects to fund and when often aren't based on how those projects help us reach our long-term goals - because the Legislature has never required ODOT to make investment choices that way!

## Measure What We Drive (SB 1542)

# How does it help?



- Ensures ODOT, the OTC, and the Legislature share long-term goals and are committed to moving in the same direction
- Builds more buy in and understanding around how and why transportation decisions are made - and what scarce dollars are buying us.
- Create an actionable and flexible fix-it-first policy that centers maintenance and safety first.
- Creates a system that works on 10 year horizons to understand how much funding we will have, and how we can best use to that funding towards goals
- Does NOT touch HB 2017 projects outlined in 71(d), but does ensure any FUTURE projects are brought in under the CIP

## Measure What We Drive (SB 1542)

# What does the bill do?

Measure What We Drive creates a performance-based, easy-to-understand process to ensure every project helping us reach our long-term goals:

1. *Codify* state goals related to safety, maintenance, congestion and so on.
2. *Score* every project on how they serve those goals.
3. *Fund* projects that most clearly serve those goals. If we fall behind, we put extra weight in the future on projects that help us meet those goals.

It also:

- Sets stronger guardrails for the largest and most expensive projects
- Requires reporting and transparency of all aspects of decision making



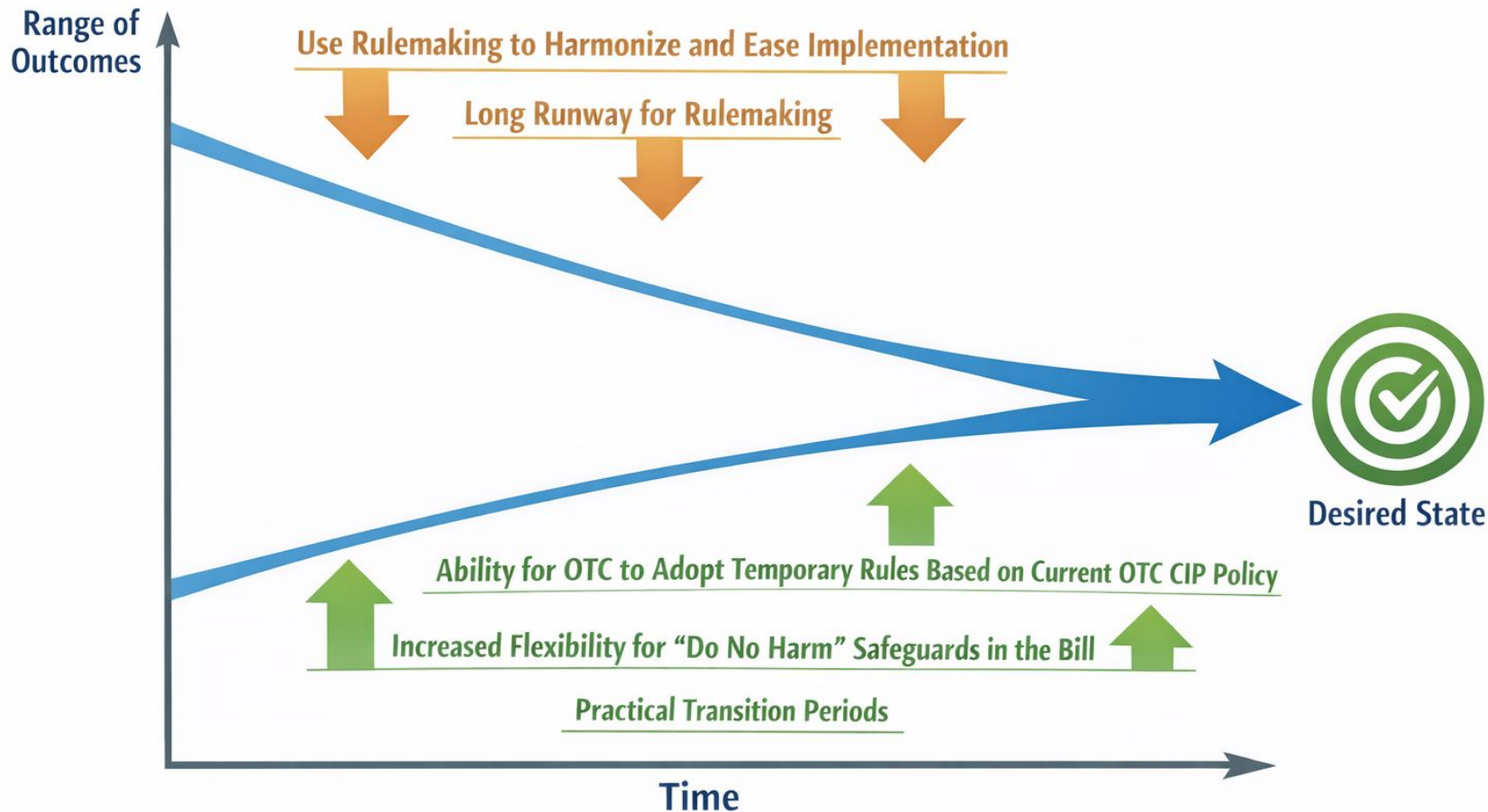
**Measure What We Drive (SB 1542)**

# **Amendment Preview for MWWD**



- **Currently engaging with ODOT, Governor's office, legislators, on an amendment for introduction on 2/9 for the PUB / WS**
- **Themes of edits for the amendment:**
  - Flexibility: Makes the bill easier to implement, not a burden Preserves safeguards while adding practical leeway
  - Timing Creates a realistic and long runway
  - Soft Landing: CIP can continue as it has + harmonize with the rulemaking + builds a long runway for rulemaking to harmonize with the CIP.
  - Right size transparency and CBA requirements

# -1 Amendment Eases Implementation



## **Guardrails For Good Governance (SB 1543)**

# **Why does it matter?**



*Since 2007, the cost of paying back the Oregon Department of Transportation's (ODOT) loans has exploded by 400%, outpacing the money coming in. Interest payments are eating the budget meant for bridge and road preservation, seismic retrofits, and safety investments that make Oregon a better place to live.*

## **Why is that happening?**

Outdated policies encourage ODOT to leverage maximum debt for projects without complete plans and financial analysis, oversight, or public accountability - inadvertently setting our priorities for us for the next 25 years.

## Guardrails For Good Governance (SB 1543)

# How does it help?



- By making sure every dollar is used efficiently and oversight is tightened, we can fix our roads while keeping costs down.
- Keeping debt in check frees up funds for 2+ decades of essential seismic, preservation, and safety projects that can be completed on time for a lower cost.
- More transparent, effective oversight from the OTC will rebuild trust and understanding in how ODOT's money is managed.

# Guardrails For Good Governance (SB 1543)

## What Does the Bill Do?



Guardrails for Good Governance strengthens the state's oversight and accountability when it comes to ODOT's use of debt. It:

1. **Creates Oregon's first binding Transportation Debt Management Policy** that
  - Charges the Oregon Transportation Commission with a genuine oversight role, clarifying that ODOT needs approval before taking on new debt and setting limits to prevent costs from growing much faster than our revenues.
  - Requires ODOT to show the OTC and the public the total price tag *before* they take on new debt.
2. **Improves transparency at the OTC to ensure every Oregonian has the information and the opportunity to engage in transportation decisions that impact them.** It strengthens communication between the OTC and the Legislature, requires public reporting around debt, and removes barriers to public engagement with the OTC's work.

# Guardrails For Good Governance (SB 1543) Amendment Preview



Our forthcoming amendment reflects feedback from committee members & ODOT:

- **Codifies bipartisan representation** for the two ex-officio OTC seats that would be appointed by the Legislature
- **Removes proposed changes to regional, modal representation** to develop further & return in a future session

# Why Support SB 1542 + SB 1543



- Oregon's transportation system is drifting toward a lose-lose: **not enough money, not enough trust, and not enough results people can feel.** These two policies are the “reset” button.
- **ODOT needs better tools NOW.** Regardless of the fiscal picture, we can, and should improve how we work for better outcomes.
- **De-risk the projects and packages for legislators:** Clear rules, roles, and transparency reduce the chance of cost overruns, opaque decisions, and frustration later.
- **Shift the narrative from “waste” to competence:** Moves transportation from a perennial vulnerability to a strength: fairness, accountability, and results you can point to.

# Questions?

