

SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

Department of Transportation Highway 97 Improvements

To: Ways and Means Full Committee
From: Transportation and Economic Development Subcommittee
Carrier: Senator McLane

On February 17th, the Transportation and Economic Development Subcommittee heard a request from the Oregon Department of Transportation for approval to submit a federal grant application to the U.S. Department of Transportation's Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (or BUILD) discretionary grant program.

The project would improve safety on a high-crash segment of U.S. Route 97 near Juniper Butte between Madras and Terrebonne, where the number of serious crashes is elevated due to winter weather, icy conditions, limited driver warnings, and lack of alternate freight routes. Planned improvements include a median barrier, advisory speed and variable-message signs, and truck-scale merge lane enhancements.

The total estimated project cost is approximately \$20.2 million, and the grant request would fully fund the project. Because the project area qualifies as rural and an area of persistent poverty under BUILD program criteria, it is eligible for up to 100% federal funding with no state match required. Applications are due February 24, 2026.

The Transportation and Economic Development Subcommittee recommends approval of the submission of a federal grant application by the Oregon Department of Transportation to the U.S. Department of Transportation, in the amount of \$20,150,000, for safety improvements on U.S. Route 97.