

Submitter: Rich Peppers
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Transportation
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1542

My name is Rich Peppers, I live in the Montavilla Neighborhood of Portland, and I am a member of the Transportation Committee of the volunteer-based and -run Mobilizing Climate Action Together (or MCAT). I appreciate all your work and service on this Committee and on Transportation issues in general, and encourage you to support SB 1542 - the Measure What We Drive bill.

Cost projections for some of the really big road and bridge projects have been growing rapidly and claiming ever higher proportions of the revenue (and debt) available to the statewide transportation system, all while the conditions of existing roads and bridges suffer and maintenance backlogs grow. SB 1542 prioritizes ensuring that our existing roads and bridges are maintained in good condition before we commit to new lane miles or major new projects, with emergencies of course excepted.

At the same time, there is a call for greater public transparency and accountability, and SB 1542 answers that call as well with, for instance, its requirement for scoring new projects on how well they would satisfy the stated goals of the statewide transportation system over a 10-year period; and then also requiring that this and other accountability information on overall road conditions and funding changes is made publicly available on a centralized website and in periodic report-backs to oversight bodies. I understand amendments to this bill are coming from the Move Oregon Forward Coalition which will integrate some of these provisions better with the rulemaking process and allow for a longer phase in process, and I expect to support those amendments also.

SB 1542 will not by itself solve all the challenges the state transportation system faces but it can help restore public confidence that priorities are in the right places and decisions are being made above board.