



**To:** Chair and Members, Senate Committee on Transportation

**Re:** SB 1544 with -2 amendment

Chair Gorsek, Vice Chair Weber, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on SB 1544, as amended by the -2. We are neutral on the bill overall, but we want to acknowledge that parts of the -2 are directionally aligned with accountability concepts our coalition has advanced through the Move Oregon Forward Accountability Bills, SB 1542 and SB 1543. At a high level, we appreciate that the -2 moves toward clearer oversight and stronger public accountability for major transportation decisions.

### **Where SB 1544 -2 overlaps with MOF priorities**

#### **1) Stronger front-end accountability before major financial commitments**

A core MOF concept in SB 1543 is that debt decisions should be governed by policy guardrails, public review, and clearer disclosure of long-term tradeoffs. SB 1543 establishes a debt financing management policy, requires OTC review and public comment before bond requests, and requires debt reporting for larger issuances (repayment schedule, total cost, revenue source, and opportunity costs).

That same accountability principle—“show the public and decision-makers the full consequences before proceeding”—is a clear point of overlap with accountability-focused elements in SB 1544 -2.

#### **2) Better transparency and public-facing performance information**

SB 1542 requires the commission to publish project-scoring methods and assumptions in advance, plus plain-language summaries for the public. It also expands public website transparency on STIP projects, including estimated vs. actual project costs and schedule outcomes.

To the extent SB 1544 -2 similarly emphasizes accountability and public-facing information, that is a meaningful overlap with MOF’s transparency framework contemplated in SB 1542 and SB 1543.

#### **3) Ongoing performance management, not one-time compliance**

SB 1542 is built around recurring accountability: annual reporting, linking plan approval to publication of those reports, and requiring corrective action if adopted goals are not being met.

That “continuous improvement” model aligns with the broader accountability direction we want to see reflected in SB 1544 implementation as well.

We see the alignment, and we request a more durable process for major governance changes. Especially when similar concepts have already been developed and publicly vetted through the MOF bills, there is value in slowing down enough to compare approaches and integrate the strongest elements.

**The path forward on aligned goals:**

We see the alignment, and we request a more durable process for major governance changes. Especially when similar concepts have already been developed and publicly vetted through the MOF bills, there is value in slowing down to compare approaches and integrate the strongest elements. As SB 1544 moves ahead, we encourage the committee and the legislature to incorporate more of the already-developed MOF policy ideas, including:

- **From SB 1542:** clearer statewide performance/scoring transparency, annual reporting with corrective-action triggers, and stronger project-level public transparency.
- **From SB 1543:** explicit debt-service guardrails, formal OTC review with public input before bond requests, and standardized long-horizon debt disclosures.

In short, we are neutral on SB 1544 overall, but supportive of key accountability provisions in the -2 that overlap with MOF priorities. We ask that the next stage of this bill include fuller public and committee consideration and, if possible, the deliberate integration of the best-vetted components from SB 1542 and SB 1543.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
**The Move Oregon Forward Steering Committee**

