

# HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

March 22, 2001  
6:30 P.M.

The Dalles  
Tapes 63-65

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**      **Rep. Bruce Starr, Chair**  
                                 **Rep. Alan Brown, Vice-Chair**  
                                 **Rep. Jeff Merkley, Vice-Chair**  
                                 **Rep. Richard Devlin**  
                                 **Rep. Jeff Kropf**  
                                 **Rep. Diane Rosenbaum**  
                                 **Rep. Cliff Zauner**

**MEMBER EXCUSED:**      **Rep. Donna Nelson**  
                                 **Rep. Joanne Verger**

**STAFF PRESENT:**              **John Leon, Committee Administrator**  
   **Kate Campeau, Committee Assistant**

**MEASURE/ISSUES HEARD: I-84/Eastern Oregon Transportation Issues**  
                                 **Introduction of New ODOT Director, Bruce Warner**  
                                 **Invited Testimony**

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These minutes are in compliance with Senate and House Rules. Only text enclosed in quotation marks reports a speaker's exact words

Tape #	Speaker	Comments
<b>TAPE 63, A</b>		
003	Chair Starr	Calls meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.
005	Chair Starr	Welcomes everyone to the House Transportation Hearing in The Dalles. Briefly discusses the goals of the transportation committee and suggests that funding is always a difficult issue reflecting on last year's defeat of the funding bill referred by Taxpayers United and AAA. Says that use of the gas tax as a way to fund the infrastructure is a declining revenue source. Brings up the topic of studded tires and the methods of paying for their impact on the roads. Introduces the committee members.
070	Bruce Warner	Director, Oregon Department of Transportation. Testifies on new directorship and submits written testimony ( <b>EXHIBIT A</b> ). Briefly discusses his background. States that funding issues are a tremendous challenge to transportation needs, citing increases in population and the increase in vehicle miles traveled as well as natural disasters which impair roads and bridges. States that partnerships with stakeholders, public and the Legislature are vitally important.
160	Rep Kropf	Talks about DMV closures and offering services through car dealerships. Asks about Mr. Warner's philosophy about privatization of ODOT activities.
200	Warner	States that he is not opposed to privatization and stresses cost efficiency. Talks about partnership and the role this plays in utilizing the private sector, such as DMV and the Internet. Asks for guidance from the Legislature in deciding how ODOT should be collecting fees for services.
210	Judge McArthur	Thanks committee for coming to The Dalles. Discusses tremendous progress in partnering with agencies and government.

240 Judge Laura Pryor Submits written testimony (**EXHIBIT B**). Talks about federally owned highways that service many counties. Talks about needs of maintaining a viable economy and the crucial part roads play in this economic viability.

**TAPE 64, A**

030 McArthur States that Sherman, Wheeler and Gilliam Counties have the highest traffic injuries/fatalities per capita. States that property taxes have supported road improvements. Discusses using libraries as a source of doing DMV business, i.e., registration renewals, license renewals, etc.

080 Chair Starr Comments on libraries as a place to service the public.

090 Rep. Devlin Asks if the witness has any comments on rail and barge methods of moving product.

100 Pryor Details that Gilliam County lost its rail line and that ODOT was in support of keeping that rail line. Talks about the disintegration of the pavement because of the heavy traffic moving wheat. Stresses that the Columbia Gorge channel must be deepened.

140 McArthur States that all of the grain goes out by barge at Biggs Junction and ninety percent of the crop goes overseas. States that deepening the channel is critical.

150 Rep. Kropf Talks about the study ODOT prepared regarding building a freeway through central Oregon and the findings that the Willamette Valley would be favorably impacted. Asks for his opinion on this study.

160 McArthur Suggests improving the existing highways rather than building new ones.

180 Pryor States that freight will “find a way”, and refers to Highway 97. Suggests that areas other than Portland Metro need to be developed for highway construction.

200 Judge John Mabrey Wasco County. Testifies on the reputation of ODOT and the great asset ODOT has been to Wasco County. Testifies that Interstate 5 and the City of Portland are very important to the rest of the state, and vice versa.

**TAPE 63, B**

010 Dennis Doherty Chair, Umatilla County Board of Commissioners. Introduces Public Works Director, Hal Phillips. Talks about Umatilla County, which has 1,650 miles in county road system and states that less than one-third is paved. Reflects that the single dominant feature in road system in Hermiston area is the convergence of Interstate 82 and Interstate 84 and predicts that this intersection will create something of interest for Oregon’s transportation future. Expresses support of ODOT. Discusses Oregon Transportation Plan and characterizes it as a formula for gridlock – overloading the system and making it almost impossible for ODOT to function. Also talks about the plethora of stakeholders created by the Oregon Transportation Plan which makes cohesive action difficult it not impossible.

060 Chair Starr Comments that in order to pass the two-cent gas tax a lot of cohesive help will be needed from other members of the legislature.

100 Doherty States appreciation for Chair Starr’s comments.

140 Rep. Devlin Expresses the need for major action within the next four weeks and likewise stresses the benefit of incremental action over a

180 Chair Starr longer period of time.  
 190 Mary Anne Davis States the need for partnership.  
 220 Nolan Young City Council, The Dalles. Testifies on local transportation issues.  
 240 Lynn Guenther City Manager, The Dalles. Testifies on the need to keep asking  
 the public what they want.  
 City Manager, Hood River. Applauds ODOT for its integrity and  
 giving honest answers to hard questions. Warns the committee  
 that Hood River will be dramatically impacted by the new casino  
 that is going to be built and stresses the need for additional  
 stoplights.

**TAPE 64, A**

030 Dewey Kennedy Road Master, Gilliam County. Discusses the county road system  
 now and in the future.  
 070 Chair Starr States encouragement of partnership of counties. Asks Mr.  
 Guenther if Confederated American Tribes would be able to  
 incur the cost of infrastructure.  
 090 Guenther Answers Chair Starr's question by stating that Oregon State  
 Parks and ODOT will be meeting to discuss the issue of access.  
 States that Confederated Indian Tribes are moving forward with  
 engineering studies and looking at purchasing additional lands.  
 110 Chair Starr States understanding of unique situation in working with  
 Confederated Indian Tribes.  
 140 Dan Bolt Director, Public Works, Wasco County. States support of  
 studded tires but recognizes the damage that is done to roads.  
 States support of ODOT and support of a small gas tax.  
 190 Louise Sergeant Special Transportation Fund, Mid-Columbia County. Talks about  
 lack of transportation providers. Asks for continued support to  
 programs that offer transportation services.  
 200 Chair Starr Expresses thanks to Bill Penhollow for his hard work in putting  
 together this very important hearing. Thanks all those who  
 attended and expresses willingness to carry banner for an  
 increased gas tax but stresses that he needs help and unified  
 voices of all those who would support this action.  
 Closes public hearing at 8:32 p.m.

Submitted By,

Reviewed By,

Kate Campeau,  
 Committee Assistant

John Leon,  
 Committee Administrator

**EXHIBIT SUMMARY**

**A –Oregon Department of Transportation, Bruce Warner, Director, written testimony, 3 pp.**  
**B – Judge Laura Pryor, written material, 9 pp.**