

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

March 23, 2001
10:00 A.M.

Redmond
Tapes 66 - 68

MEMBERS PRESENT: Rep. Bruce Starr, Chair
Rep. Alan Brown, Vice-Chair
Rep. Jeff Merkley, Vice-Chair
Rep. Jeff Knopf
Rep. Diane Rosenbaum
Rep. Cliff Zauner

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Rep. Richard Devlin
Rep. Donna Nelson
Rep. Joanne Verger

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

MEASURE/ISSUES HEARD: Alan Unger, City Council, City of Redmond
Introduction of New ODOT Director, Bruce Warner
Jane O'Keefe, Commissioner, Lake County
Arlene Clark, Mayor, Lakeview
Bob Bryant, Regional Manager, Oregon Dept. of Transportation
Dennis Luke, Commissioner, Deschutes County
Bill Bellamy, Commissioner, Jefferson County
Bill Friedman, Mayor, City of Bend
Judge Scott Cooper, Crook County
Witness Testimony

These minutes are in compliance with Senate and House Rules. Only text enclosed in quotation marks reports a speaker's exact words. For complete contents, please refer to the tapes.

TAPE/#	Speaker	Comments
TAPE 66, A 001	Chair Starr	Calls meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Expresses gratitude for the gracious welcome by the Redmond and Bend communities. Affirms importance of members of the Legislature to visit Oregon and see the actual needs, problems, challenges and opportunities of Oregonians on a regular basis. States that he is vitally interested in the transportation issues that challenge citizens everyday. Introduces members of the committee.
040	Alan Unger	City Council, City of Redmond. Testifies on transportation issues that impact Redmond and submits written testimony (EXHIBIT A). States that ODOT has a new cooperative spirit. Urges regional exceptions for regional differences by use of the Regional Community Solutions Team. Urges full support of ODOT's budget. Estimates that Redmond's population in 2020 will be 36,000. Suggests a bypass around the urban growth boundary. Thanks the committee for their journey to Redmond from Salem.

100	Bruce Warner	Director, Oregon Department of Transportation. Talks briefly about his background with local government for over twenty-eight years and stresses his expertise in transportation issues. Repeats some vital statistics about population growth, deterioration of highways and bridges as well as sharing encouraging data on the decline of car fatalities in the last few years. Reiterates some of his expectations in order for ODOT to sustain its level of performance - requiring cooperation internally and requiring the mandates of the Legislature to be upheld. Stresses that ODOT is headed in the right direction and looks forward to a vital and productive future.
200	Jane O'Keefe	Commissioner, Lake County. Talks about the status of transportation in Oregon's third largest county. States that fast growth is not a problem in Lake County. Describes Lake County's economy as primarily natural resource based. States that the county has three paved airports, which primarily moves people and products; a train - a short line - from Lakeview to Alturas, California; and the highways, which she describes as the lifeblood of the county. Explains that Highway 140 is badly in need of repair, that it is hindering the safe passage of citizens and products but the the highway is not on the STIP. Concludes by praising the state highway crews for keeping the highway clear in the wintertime. Introduces Mayor Arlene Clark.
300	Arlene Clark	Mayor, City of Lakeview. Briefly outlines transportation issues pertinent to Lake County, concurring with the previous description of Highway 140 as being unsafe. Asserts that this highway is a priority and that it is of vital importance to both Klamath and Lake Counties. Commends all of the state agencies, particularly ODOT, for their cooperation and adds that the Community Solutions Team has been a great benefit.
TAPE 67, A		
030	Chair Starr	Comments on the variety of needs in communities throughout Oregon. Notes consistent favorable message regarding ODOT and the Community Solutions Team; assures audience that this will be duly considered when discussing budget priorities.
050	Rep. Brown	States that he serves on the Senior Citizen Task Force and that seven meetings have been held around the state. Affirms that citizen feedback puts transportation for seniors as a top priority.
060	Rep. Merkley	Asks about limitation on truck lanes.
070	O'Keefe	Answers that there are several curves in the highway that need to be widened.
080	Rep. Merkley	Asks if the highway on the Nevada side is a problem.
083	O'Keefe	Answers that the Nevada road is in very good condition.
090	Rep. Kropf	Asks what the price tag is to bring road up to current standard.
100	O'Keefe	Answers that the latest price tag was around \$8 million dollars.
105	Bob Bryant	Region Manger, ODOT. Concurrs that \$8 million is a rough estimate to bring the highway up to current standards.
110	Rep. Kropf	Comments on other sections of the highway Speculates that the total cost would be around \$30 million.
112	Clark	Concurs with Rep. Kropf's estimation and adds that Lake County is eligible for federal funding.
114	Dennis Luke	Commissioner, Deschutes County and Chairman of the Central Oregon Area Commission on Transportation. Offers that there are many, many transportation projects on the list but only three

		or four can be picked.
115	Chair Starr	Welcomes Senator Clarno to the hearing.
120	Luke	Continues with testimony. States that prioritizing for the STIP is also very difficult and contributes that ODOT is doing what the Legislature has asked them to do - to meet with local government and work with local government. Offers example of Grace Crunican, past director of ODOT, responding to local feedback and making it possible for representatives to sit in on the regional manager interviews.
		Testifies that he always voted for the gas tax because of the need of local governments. Concludes testimony with assertion that studded tires are vitally important for safe driving in harsh weather.
180	Bill Bellamy	Commissioner, Jefferson County. Stresses that every county in Oregon is unique with different concerns and varying sources and amounts of revenue.
TAPE 66, B		
020	Bellamy	Continues testimony with comments about Crook County's \$18 million trust fund for their road program and compliments their good management of this money. Continues that one county may receive money in federal forest receipts and that other counties may receive none. States that there is no gas tax revenue from the tourist trade. Details that the only way to take care of transportation infrastructure is through revenue, and the only viable revenue is a gas tax. Concludes that Jefferson County does not have the resources to cooperate with ODOT.
080	Chair Starr	Offers that local money, local match money, is being looked at in the Legislature – asks how ODOT and Transportation Commission is doing in prioritizing projects as far as the local match component is concerned.
140	Luke	Responds favorably to ODOT and the Transportation Commission's prioritizing of projects. States that primarily the match money comes from the gas tax.
160	Bellamy	Answers that in Jefferson County there is no money to match.
170	Chair Starr	States that Legislators have no idea how hard it is decide which projects are chosen for construction. Reiterates his willingness to get votes for a gas tax, and asks for help in lobbying the necessary members of the legislature.
200	Bellamy	Assures the committee that the counties uniformly supported the gas tax bill.
220	Rep. Zauner	States that user fees and toll roads have been discussed, and asks if that is a viable solution.
250	Luke	Contributes that a toll road at Newberg was approved but that it still has not been built.
280	Rep. Rosenbaum	Talks about the public reaction to the gas tax, the perception of government, and asks what the commissioner's constituents feel about the gas tax and the funding situation
290	Luke	Answers that the gas tax failed because of a battle between the truckers and AAA, and that such a power play is a bad way to set policy. Suggests communicating the priorities, i.e., listing the projects and clearly identifying when they will be built, the cost, etc.
300	Bellamy	Shares with the committee that in a past legislative session the

		Governor and the Speaker of the House forced the passing of a gas tax by refusing to adjourn the session.
320	Rep. Merkley	Asks what the impact would be if the gas tax was distributed based on where it was purchased rather than by population.
327	Bellamy	Offers that is probably not a plausible solution.
330	Rep. Merkley	Replies that residents of Portland avoid gas tax by trying to purchase gas elsewhere.
340	Luke	Contributes that the needs are tremendous in both large metro and rural areas.
350	Chair Starr	Projects that the gas tax will not be a viable solution in the future.
359	Judge Scott Cooper	Testifies that Crook County is the only county that is not located on the Highway 97 corridor and offers that Highway 97 is the only unpaved state highway in Oregon. Requests that ODOT take a more holistic approach when selecting transportation projects, i.e., that a project in Bend greatly impacts Redmond, etc. Also states that studded tires are not a convenience but a necessity for safe winter driving.

TAPE 67, B

002	Rep. Merkley	Asks if getting high-speed service is an issue.
006	Cooper	States that telecommunications is critical and details various businesses' needs.
030	Ernest DeCorte	Testifies in favor of studded tires, using a better grade of pavement on roads and notes instances of road safety.
050	Chair Starr	Asks how the witness would prefer to pay for the roads rather than using a gas tax.
054	DeCorte	States that business needs to pay their fair share.
060	Chair Starr	Asks if witness objects to additional tax.
070	Decorte	Asserts that gas tax goes for many things and practically nothing for roads.
080	Chair Starr	Answers that the .24 cents and the equivalent money that is raised for the weight mile is dedicated to the road system and the process by which ODOT spends and administers those funds.
100	Norbert Volny	Resident of Deschutes County, Bend. Testifies on building a bypass/truck route around Bend and submits written material (EXHIBIT B) .
160	Bill Friedman	Mayor, City of Bend. Welcomes the committee. Describes Bend as a small city. States support for the Area Committee of Transportation that facilitates opportunities to interact with ODOT. Affirms support of permanent funding solutions for ODOT. Discusses transition to public transit and the major cost justification barriers, detailing that dial-a-ride will be expanded for general public use.
260	John Schubert	Mayor Protem, City of Bend. Asks for support of HB 3712, which is known as the safe-routes-to-schools-bill, which would tap into an ODOT grant for bike safety paths. Details ODOT's assistance in the Transportation Demand Response System, i.e., developing biking, walking, telecommuting, ride share and public transportation commute options. Expresses gratitude to the Department of Land Conservation and Development and ODOT for their joint participation in the Transportation Growth Management Program.

TAPE 68, A

003	Rep. Merkley	Comments on the Transportation Demand Response System –
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010	Friedman	asks how it is different from the taxi system. Answers that it is unique in that it helps determine groups of people and their travel needs to establish future fixed routes.
014	Senator Bev Clarno	State Senator, District 27. Comments that she will oppose any fee on studded tires because fire, police and emergency vehicles have asserted that fees will create a burden for low-income people.
020	Chair Starr	Thanks everyone for their attendance. Thanks Doug Riggs for helping to set up the trip. Acknowledges Betty Borgen with the City of Redmond as well as Bill Penhollow and the committee staff. Adjourns Redmond meeting at 11:35 a .m.

Submitted By,

Reviewed By,

Kate Campeau,
Committee Assistant

John Leon
Committee Administrator

EXHIBIT SUMMARY

- A – Witness written testimony, Alan Unger, City Council, Redmond, 3 pp.**
- B – Witness written testimony, Norbert Volny, 8 pp.**