

Joint Interim Committee on Transportation Preservation and Modernization
Meeting Summary – North East ACT working lunch, Port of Morrow tour
Wednesday, June 29, 2016

Members Present: Sen. Beyer, Co-Chair; Sen. Boquist, Sen. Edwards, Sen. Johnson, Sen. Monroe, Sen. Winters; Rep. McKeown, Co-Chair; Rep. Bentz; Rep. Lively; Rep. McLain, Rep. Olson, Rep. Smith, Rep. Smith-Warner

Visiting Legislators Present: Speaker Kotek

Members Excused: Sen. Girod

Working Lunch with Members of North East Area Commission on Transportation

Committee members shared a networking lunch with members of the North East Area Commission on Transportation (NEACT). Welcoming remarks were provided by Larry Givens, Umatilla County Commissioner and ACT Chair. Other attendees included: Larry Givens, Umatilla County Commissioner; Tom Fellows, Umatilla County; Mark Davidson, Union County Commissioner; Steve McClure, Union County Commissioner; Doug Wright, Union County; Jeff Smith, Baker County; Burke O'Brien, Morrow County Public Works Director; Byron Smith, Hermiston City Manager; Mark Morgan, Hermiston City Assistant Manager; Aaron Palmquist, Irrigon City Manager; Michelle Owen, Baker City Public Works manager; Dennis Sands, Mayor of Joseph; Mary Jo Carpenter, Community Connection of Northeast Oregon; Jodi Tool, Community Connection of Northeast Oregon; Ron McKinnis, Port of Morrow; Kim Puzey, Port of Umatilla; Paul Koch, Port of Cascade Locks; Mike McArthur, Association of Oregon Counties; Sharon Livingston, rancher; Craig Sipp, ODOT Region 5 manager; Tom Strandberg, ODOT; Teresa Penninger, ODOT; Paul Mather, Highway Division Administrator, ODOT; Melissa Drugge, Oregon Business Development Department; Scott Fairley, Governor's Regional Solutions manager; and Karmen Fore, Governor's Office.

Hermiston and Port of Morrow Tour

The Committee assembled at Hermiston High School and boarded a charter bus for a tour of transportation issues in Hermiston and economic development projects at the Port of Morrow. Information was provided regarding a major paving project on Highway 395, as well as needed improvements where lack of a left-turn lane resulted in a recent fatal accident. There was also discussion of needs on U.S. 730.

Rep. Greg Smith noted the advantages that the region around the Port of Morrow has for industrial development: proximity to the McNary Dam and location near the geographic center of the Pacific Northwest power grid; adjacent to the Columbia River, Interstate 84, Interstate 82 and the main line of the Union Pacific Railroad; and proximity to a natural gas pipeline.

Other nearby facilities reviewed included:

- A two-acre solar array, operated by Umatilla Electric Cooperative, which is the largest co-op solar project in Oregon;
- A reverse-osmosis water cooling plant that services five nearby data centers;

- Grain silos and open-air grain storage;
- Container loading crane and log loader;
- The site for a former proposed coal loading facility; and
- The Interstate 82 interstate bridge, which requires repair work.

The Umatilla Army Depot, which has disposed of all chemical weapons formerly contained on site, has certified all lands clean of contamination, and is now in negotiation for granting land to local governments.

The Port of Morrow, which is Oregon's youngest port, is projected to soon become the state's second largest port behind the Port of Portland. Employing over 7,000 people, the port and attached facilities help give Morrow County the state's fifth highest per capita income. Some of the on-site facilities that the Committee reviewed included:

- The largest French fry production facility in the world;
- The largest Tillamook cheese factory in Oregon;
- An Amazon data center;
- A facility that compresses hay for export to Asia;
- Onion and garlic dehydration facilities;
- Aggregate mining;
- A plant that makes ethanol, the waste products of which are used as cattle feed;
- The Coyote Spring power generation facility; and
- Barenberg grass seed.

Sites set aside for future development include set-asides for:

- An Adzuki bean processing facility;
- A flour mill;
- One of the world's largest mint stills.

Rep. Smith commented on the connected nature of ports on the Columbia/Snake river system and emphasized that the vitality and reliability of transportation facilities in the Portland metropolitan region play a critical role in moving goods produced in Eastern Oregon to markets in the United States and throughout the world.