



Oregon

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To: The Honorable Caddy McKeown, Chair
House Committee on Transportation Policy

From: Carrie MacLaren, Deputy Director
Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD)

RE: House Bill 3231



Thank you for this opportunity to provide you with information about HB 3231. The bill, as introduced, would allow the formation of a limited-access public highway project district and change the approval requirements and procedures for transportation projects.

Current Law

Under existing land use law, proposed transportation projects must be included in an acknowledged city or county transportation system plan (TSP) before they can be constructed. If the proposed project is a new highway on rural resource land (exclusive farm use or forest zoning), then a county would need to consider and approve an exception to the statewide planning goals before adding the project to the transportation system plan. The exception process requires the county to consider alternative alignments and impacts to farm and forest practices including any increases cost or difficulty transporting equipment or products. Counties may not approve an exception on land designated as a rural reserve (OAR 660-027-0070).

Summary of Concerns

The newly formed district, proposed in the bill, would not be subject to the Oregon's transportation system planning framework, which is coordinated with Oregon's Statewide Planning Goals. The coordination between transportation and land use planning is essential to ensure smart transportation investments for mobility, freight and connectivity to land use.

The bill would require counties to approve major highways without any consideration of the impacts to or from the existing transportation system or land uses, or local transportation system plans. The bill would also require the approval of such highways without consideration of impacts to impacts to farms, forests, or natural areas, including areas within Portland Metro region that have been designated as rural reserves (land that has been specifically protected to protect the region's most productive farm and forest lands, and important natural areas).

Transportation infrastructure is one of the largest drivers of land use, and land uses shape transportation in turn. Oregon's transportation and land use planning programs recognize this interrelationship through the coordination requirements in Oregon's Planning Goal 12 (Transportation), assuring that land uses support (and not undermine) the efficacy of the

transportation system. It is important that transportation investments support (and do not undermine) land uses and development – thereby best using our scarce financial resources to build vibrant communities. Thoughtfully planned communities save money on transportation infrastructure while providing more travel choices for Oregonians.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments on HB 3231. If committee members have questions about this testimony, I may be contacted at (503) 934-0051 or carrie.maclaren@dlcd.state.or.us.