

# The City of Vale, Oregon

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Malheur County Seat

June 5, 2017

To: Joint Committee on Transportation Preservation and Maintenance

From: Lynn Findley, City of Vale

Re: HB 2017 – Transportation Funding and Policy

Good evening co-chairs and members of the committee, my name is Lynn Findley and I am the City Manager for the City of Vale. I appreciate your accommodating my testimony by telephone this evening saving me 14 hours of drive time through our beautiful state.

You may recall that I testified to you nearly a year ago at the field hearing you held in Ontario. My message to you today is substantially the same except that I want to add my thanks to all of you and your staff for the hard work that has brought us to where we are tonight. I also want to specifically acknowledge the fact that you heard my message and the messages of several other small city officials in Oregon about the unique needs confronting Oregon's small cities.

HB 2017's commitment to increasing the Special City Allotment by \$4 million annually bringing the program total to \$5 million, and maintaining the 50-50 contribution split between ODOT and all the cities in Oregon, is in keeping with the rest of the package. You have indeed "gone big." This is the only increase in funding since the program's inception, HB 2017's contribution to this program will provide a significant boost to small cities who, although receive their per capita share of state highway funds, still must often enhance their street maintenance and repair budgets with general or other funds, or let their street assets continue to deteriorate. To the extent that this increase relieves that tension, the residents of these smaller cities – your constituents – will benefit from not only from better streets but also increased protection and other city services.

The Treasure Valley Trans Model Facility is a second example of HB 2017 "going big" and responding to regional needs. This facility will greatly improve our ability to market our locally grown commodities nationally.

Speaking for the League, I can tell you that the LOC is looking forward to consulting with ODOT in establishing a small city advisory group to review project applications and make recommendations as to which cities should be awarded grants. The other stipulations in the bill outlining project restrictions and other administrative procedures are consistent with the current program.

After passage of HB 2017 the League will promptly get busy in assisting with the establishment of the advisory group so that it is in place for the next round of grants. The League may also enter discussions with ODOT about increasing the current \$50,000 grant cap to facilitate even more impactful projects.

Again, thank you for hearing the small cities' testimony during your field hearings last year, and for taking these significant steps on their behalf.

Another aspect of the bill that has the attention of small cities relates to accountability. At first glance the increased responsibilities proposed in HB 2017 relative to reporting on street revenues, expenditures and pavement conditions could seem rather daunting for small cities. But along with privilege comes responsibility. So, I will assure you that in working with the League and ODOT small cities will assist in the development of methodologies, procedures and formats that both show transparency in and accountability for local management of transportation funding and do so in a way that does not overburden small local governments.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you again, and I am happy to take questions.

Sincerely,

/s/ Lynn Findley

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