

Readers respond: Failure of transportation package extends beyond ODOT

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The Westside Economic Alliance shares in the disappointment of many as the state transportation funding package failed this legislative session. Hundreds of employees at the Oregon Department of Transportation now face layoffs, leading to decreased safety, maintenance and operations of our state, county and city transportation and transit systems.

WEA represents members of the private, public and non-profit sectors, working to build a vibrant, equitable and accessible economy on the westside of the Portland metro region. Supporting a well-funded and safe transportation system is one of the primary focuses of our work.

We call on legislators to head back to Salem for a special session to pass a complete, bipartisan transportation package. Without a package, there won't just be job loss at ODOT, Oregon's economy will suffer due to lost wages in the construction and engineering sector, higher costs for business due to vehicle wear and tear, and decreased competitiveness as companies choose to locate in states with robust infrastructure.

We recommend addressing the following:

- Define state, county and local system needs and identify the cost.
- Outline what Oregon drivers currently pay and identify the increase needed for a safe, reliable system.
- [Communicate](#) the impact of the diminishing gas tax and propose bold alternatives.
- Engage the business community to help shape solutions.

Do not be satisfied with a "band-aid fix." Think big, be bold and create a long-term investment package.

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