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NEWS RELEASE

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Hallmarks of 2015 Bonding Package: School Safety, Affordable Housing, Transportation

SALEM – Today the Oregon Legislature advanced a bonding package that will fund key construction projects across the state, including major safety improvements to K-12 schools, a landmark investment in affordable housing, and targeted transportation safety projects.

The package, contained in House Bills 5005, 5006, 5030 and 5029, passed out of the Capital Construction sub-committee this afternoon and will move to the full budget-writing committee tonight as the Legislature works toward adjourning before the constitutional deadline of July 11.

The largest authorization is \$175 million for major seismic upgrades to K-12 schools throughout the state. An additional \$125 million will be available to school districts across the state to fix outdated, dilapidated, and hazardous facilities, while building physical capacity for full-day kindergarten and working toward a long-term facilities plan that will turn Oregon schools into the facilities students deserve.

“This bonding package will get much-needed projects in the pipeline, create jobs in the short-term, and spur economic activity throughout our state going forward,” said Rep. Tobias Read (D – Beaverton), co-chair of the sub-committee on Capital Construction. “It also reflects our priorities as a state, with investments in Oregon’s public school buildings, critical transportation improvements, and other projects that will benefit communities throughout Oregon.”

The package includes an innovative \$40 million investment in affordable housing construction – a top priority for House Speaker Tina Kotek (D – N/NE Portland), which will help thousands of families and take an important step to address Oregon’s statewide housing crisis. An additional \$20 million will build supportive housing for Oregonians struggling with mental illness or addiction, and another \$2.5 million will help preserve existing affordable housing.

“Our state is facing a housing crisis that families across our state are feeling,” said House Speaker Tina Kotek (D – N/NE Portland). “It won’t be easy to solve this problem, but the Legislature’s work to invest in safe, stable, and affordable housing, with a total of \$62.5 million in bonding, is a critical step toward stronger communities.”

The package also makes an \$80 million investment in Oregon’s transportation infrastructure, including \$35 million to improve the safety of some of the most deadly intersections and dangerous stretches of highway in communities across the state, \$45 million in multimodal transportation through the ConnectOregon program, and \$10 million to continue upgrading the Coos Bay Rail Line.

Other projects slated for authorization include \$50 million in grant and loan funds to help meet water storage and conservation needs and approximately \$240 million for construction projects and upgrades at each of Oregon’s public universities.

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