



SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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Landmark investment in Oregon jobs and transportation clears Senate vote
*HB 2001 will keep commuters and commerce moving by investing
in the state's aging transportation systems*

SALEM – A bipartisan transportation and job creation package passed the Senate this morning with a 24-6-vote. House Bill 2001 is estimated to create 4,600 jobs each year within the Oregon economy during its first five years of implementation through repairing and modernizing Oregon's aging transportation systems.

“In these tough times we cannot allow Oregon to get stuck in traffic. This transportation package keeps our state moving by building roads and bridges, creating thousands of jobs and reducing greenhouse gases,” said Senate President Peter Courtney (D-Salem/Gervais/Woodburn). “The legislature has found a path during these troubled times to avoid a partisan detour and dead end gridlock.”

The revenue raised in HB 2001 will fund projects across the state. Some of the biggest projects include the Sunrise Corridor improvements, the Newberg-Dundee bypass, an extra lane on Highway 26 from 185th to Cornell, improvements to Highway 62 in Southern Oregon, the Sellwood Bridge in Portland and the Beltline system improvements in Lane County. The 23 projects in the Eastern Oregon region amount to over \$80 million in that region of the state, plus the money received by cities and counties.

“Transportation is the vascular system from which commerce in Oregon flows and it is the lifeblood that determines the business health of our state,” said Senator Rick Metsger (D-Welches), chair of the Senate Business and Transportation Committee.

Sensitivity to the economic challenges facing Oregon families prompted legislators to make the gas tax clause provisional upon signs of economic recovery. The plan calls for a six cent increase to go into effect when the economy shows improvement for two straight quarters or January 1, 2011, whichever is earlier. Increases in vehicle registration and title fees, along with an increase in the weight-mile tax paid by truckers, are also included.

“Almost a year ago Senate Democrats began the process of developing an agenda that works for all Oregonians,” said Senate Majority Leader Richard Devlin (D-Tualatin). “Today we deliver a big piece of that agenda by passing a transportation package that starts to address the state's crumbling infrastructure in a manner that is responsive to the needs of Oregon families, our businesses, and our environment.”

The transportation package passed today is the most environmentally progressive in Oregon's history. HB 2001 contains several provisions that will help Oregon work toward statewide targets to reduce greenhouse gases. Those include increased funding for transit and passenger rail improvements, bike and pedestrian projects, and clauses to make sure greenhouse gas emissions are considered during the transportation planning process.

The next stop for HB 2001 is the Governor's desk.

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