

STATE SENATOR LARRY GEORGE
(R-SHERWOOD)
SENATE DISTRICT 13

STATE REPRESENTATIVE
KIM THATCHER
(R-KEIZER, NEWBERG, ST. PAUL)
HOUSE DISTRICT 25

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Projects of Statewide Significance Get Hearing

(Salem) Dozens of business and civic leaders turned out today to support a bill to generate \$150 million in bond money for six projects of statewide significance. Senate Bill 784, co-sponsored by [State Senator Larry George](#) (R-Sherwood) and [State Representative Kim Thatcher](#) (R-Keizer, Newberg, St. Paul) was up for a public hearing before the Senate Committee on Business, Transportation and Workforce Development.

"We have a lot of needs around the state, but these projects need special focus," George told members of the Senate Committee. The projects of statewide significance have been on the Oregon Department of Transportation's "to-do" list for several years. [SB 784](#) applies to the [Newberg-Dundee Bypass](#), the [Sunrise Corridor](#) in Clackamas County, [the I-5/99W connector](#) in the Tigard area, [Highway 62 improvements](#) in Jackson County, a third [bridge over the Columbia River](#) in Portland and a third [bridge over the Willamette](#) in Salem.

Thatcher testified, "for the past two legislative sessions the focus has been on non-road projects...I'm not knocking the importance of railroads and airports I am merely pointing out it's high time we build some roads in Oregon!" Last session \$100 million in lottery bonds was approved for [multi-modal transportation projects](#) and a similar amount is proposed for this session.

The two legislators have been working on ways to fund these projects of statewide significance using a series of bills. They include SB 784, [SB 785](#) and [House Bill 3413](#). They became frustrated after ODOT conducted studies on the [possibility of tolls](#) funding some of these projects. While tolling is still a viable option there should be other sources of revenue available [such as the bonding](#) discussed in SB 784. George and Thatcher joined a large [delegation from Yamhill County](#) on the steps of the State Capitol March 20th for a special "Just Build It" rally to support the projects of statewide significance.

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