



FROM THE OFFICES OF THE  
**PRESIDENT OF THE OREGON SENATE**  
&  
**SPEAKER OF THE OREGON HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

February 13, 2025

**Press contacts:**

Connor Radnovich, [connor.radnovich@oregonlegislature.gov](mailto:connor.radnovich@oregonlegislature.gov)

Jill Bakken, [jill.bakken@oregonlegislature.gov](mailto:jill.bakken@oregonlegislature.gov)

## **Presiding Officers Tap Sen. Bruce Starr to Lead Development of ODOT Accountability Proposal**

*The 20-year transportation policy leader will hand-pick a team to craft ODOT accountability recommendations for the 2025 transportation package*

**SALEM, Ore.** – Today, **Senate President Rob Wagner (D-Lake Oswego)** and **House Speaker Julie Fahey (D-Eugene)** announced that **Senator Bruce Starr (R-Dundee)** will lead the development of recommendations for an accountability proposal as a central component of the Legislature's 2025 transportation package.

“It’s critical for ODOT to get back to its core mission: making sure roads are safe, freight can move, and helping families get where they need to go,” **Sen. Starr** said. “Given the serious challenges facing the agency, the Legislature has a real opportunity to make meaningful reforms to how ODOT is doing business. I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to identify and implement changes that restore accountability and ensure Oregonians get the most out of their transportation tax dollars.”

Oregon taxpayers deserve sound stewardship of their hard-earned dollars and to know that agencies entrusted with those dollars will use them wisely. While the accountability recommendations will likely require difficult decisions, they will be necessary to restore trust with the public.

Additionally, the Oregon Department of Transportation is facing a significant budget shortfall due to increasing electric vehicle use and more fuel-efficient vehicles cutting into fuels tax revenue, which will only worsen in the future.

If the Legislature does not act to stabilize ODOT this session, roads across the state won't be paved or plowed in the winters, hundreds of miles of highways will go without proper maintenance, and DMV offices will be at risk of closure. Nearly 1,000 ODOT employees will also lose their jobs.

"We've been clear since this process began that accountability will be a key aspect of the 2025 transportation package; the third leg of the stool, along with creating a stable funding structure and the safety and maintenance operations we're funding," **Speaker Fahey** said.

Sen. Starr will put together a team to review current ODOT accountability mechanisms and their effectiveness, while also studying where additional mechanisms should be added. A draft accountability plan will be presented to the Joint Committee on Transportation in March.

Led by co-chairs **Sen. Chris Gorsek (D-Gresham)** and **Rep. Susan McLain (D-Hillsboro)**, legislators on the Joint Committee on Transportation will craft a legislative package this session that will provide stable, sustainable funding for ODOT, complete major unfinished projects, and ensure accountability within the agency.

This process began last summer with a 12-stop statewide tour where legislators heard directly from local leaders and community members about their transportation needs and funding options. Public workgroup meetings were held in the fall as the broad strokes of the package began to take shape.

"Inaction is not an option. We need a transportation system that supports Oregon's economy, allows parents to get their kids to school, and ensures the health and safety of our communities," **President Wagner** said. "Sen. Starr is a veteran of transportation policy and Sen. Gorsek and I are grateful our Senate colleague agreed to step up and lead this critical accountability work."

###