

POLK COUNTY

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

POLK COUNTY COURTHOUSE * DALLAS, OREGON 97338-3174
(503) 623-8173 * FAX (503) 623-0896

Commissioners
CRAIG A. POPE
JEREMY GORDON
LYLE MORDHORST

GREGORY P. HANSEN
Administrative Officer

June 7, 2022

To: the three leading candidates for Oregon Governor.

We are writing today to express our concern for the lack of Executive branch leadership that has been demonstrated over the past years under more than one administration. Specifically, oversight of state agencies such as Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF), Department of Administrative Services (DAS), Oregon Health Authority (OHA), and Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and its governing Board, the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC).

Our interest in writing to you is more specifically regarding ODOT/OTC. We are watching, in dismay, an agency that is mandated and funded to manage our major transportation infrastructure investments seemingly ignore the responsibility of regular maintenance. As a county with accountable leadership in this business, locally, we wonder where the money collected from our gas taxes is being spent.

The Polk County Commissioners know how much money is sent to the county from these taxes for our responsibilities (and it hasn't dropped markedly as is stated by some at the state) and we continue to manage costs and invest our dollars in as many miles of roads or bridges as we can every year. Polk County proudly displays a recent award for quality of roads as "Best in State" and we know the root of that comes from maintaining the massive investments that our citizens entrusted us with. That understanding has garnered Polk County government with two significant maintenance bonds in 1986 and 2006 that was partnered with gas tax money to improve roads to a "Best in State" level and we have never stopped working on our responsibility to maintain them.

So, our question is; what is ODOT/OTC doing with the money? Our state-managed roads and bridges are literally falling apart in an expedited fashion. It would seem that someone wants this to happen and has engineered a system that will facilitate it. We know the money is being collected in gas taxes but what we don't know (and can't get an intelligent response for) is what is it being spent on? Polk County has state roads across the county that may be in need

of speed zone changes due to unsafe conditions and hazards caused by negligence.

When we ask ODOT region managers about schedules for repairs and rebuilding these areas we are often told there is a "patch crew" scheduled to address it soon. We are confident that you know as well we do that this is not an effective maintenance strategy and structural failure is eminent.

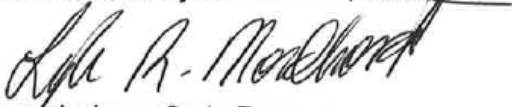
Our problems in this state are vast. We need real executive-level leadership and an agency(s) boss that will demand better...and get it. All of the agencies we have cited (and more) need an overhaul in our opinion but ODOT needs a top-down audit and accountability measures on your first day in office as Governor if you are successful in your campaign.

We are out of time. Our state roads and bridges are resembling some third-world countries and as true governing partners we would like an answer about how you plan to address this crisis with us. We believe a response to this request is fair and a-political and will help us all understand who in this race for Oregon Governor has what it takes to stand with County Commissioners to solve real Oregon problems.

We are extending an invitation to sit down with us soon, at any Board of Commissioners meeting we have to discuss your thoughts on how to address these challenges that we face together.

Looking forward to your response.

Commissioner Lyle Mordhorst, Chair



Commissioner Craig Pope



Commissioner Jeremy Gordon

