



Legislative Update – June 10, 2015

Many Issues Still in Play as 2015 Legislature Moves Toward Adjournment *Transportation Package, Connect Oregon Pending...*

Many key transportation priorities remain under consideration, most prominently an omnibus transportation package, the Connect Oregon program and funding for senior and disabled transit services, as the Oregon Legislative Assembly moves toward adjournment of the 2015 legislative session early next month.

In a session marked by partisan rancor, policymakers are making a late session bipartisan push to arrive at a transportation package. Transportation leaders in all four legislative caucuses are conducting intense negotiations aimed at clearing a path for a transportation package that likely would include fee and/or gas tax increases.

Transportation package discussions stalled in February after legislative leaders pushed through a controversial carbon emissions reduction measure, the so-called low carbon fuel standard (LCFS), which many stakeholders believe will significantly increase the price of fuel for Oregonians. Republicans have insisted that the legislature mitigate or otherwise repeal the LCFS before they will consider additional fee or gas tax increases to finance Oregon's transportation infrastructure needs.

Whether legislative deliberations will yield a result during the 2015 session remains unclear given the limited time remaining to strike a deal. If policymakers run out of time, many observers believe these discussions will set the stage for interim discussions concerning a package, perhaps in the 2016 legislative session.

Meanwhile progress on a lottery backed Connect Oregon program continues. Last week OTA government affairs advocates joined other transportation stakeholders in testifying in support of the program. Those efforts culminated in the House Rules Committee approving a \$58.6 million Connect Oregon package. That's up from the \$40 million approved by the 2011 and \$42 million in 2013. The bill, HB 2274, is awaiting approval by the Joint Committee on Ways and Means.

OTA's government affairs team also is working to secure additional resources for senior and disabled transit services. The amount of the appropriation remains unclear but should be in the vicinity of \$10 million. The appropriation likely will not be finalized until the final days of the 2015 session.

OTA will keep members posted as the 2015 session reaches its final and most critical phase and untimely adjournment in the next four to five weeks.