



# Oregon

Theodore R. Kulongoski, Governor

## Department of Transportation

Office of the Director

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December 27, 2004

### FILE CODE:

This letter is in response to comments the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) has received regarding the update of the State Highway Freight System. I want to thank you for taking the time to voice your issues and concerns. Your comments have been thoughtful and beneficial. It is clear from the number of comments received that we need to step back and "reconnect" on the overall purpose and desired outcomes from this effort.

### WHY WE ARE DOING THIS PROJECT?

The reasons to embark on this ambitious effort include the following:

- In January 2004, the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) approved changes to the Oregon Highway Plan (OHP). These changes were made to simplify the process of defining stretches of highway by type, known as highway segment designations, especially where a state highway is the main street through a town. Because there was concern about how the highway segment designations would affect "through" freight movements, the OTC recommended an evaluation of Oregon freight routes and their relationship to these designations.
- In House Bill 2041 (Oregon Transportation Investment Act III), the legislature put into law that ODOT and our Commission will give priority to funding projects that are important for freight. This is due to the legislature's affirmation that our state's ability to move goods and services within and through the state are critical to our future economy.
- Freight transportation is expected to double in the next 15 years. The increase in freight will occur on all modes of transportation, but trucking will continue to be the predominant mode. Trucking's share of freight movements is currently about 70% and this will increase slightly over that 15 year period to about 72%.

### DESIRED OUTCOMES

Successful implementation of the OHP must include the following elements:

- ODOT's plans and maps have been revised to identify those state highways that are now, or in the future, important routes for the movement of goods and services within and through the state.
- Continuation of work with local governments to identify and designate highway segment designations. These include city and community areas along state highways where ODOT and the local government will recognize the desires for more intense development/redevelopment, additional access, slower speeds and higher levels of congestion to reflect the area's plans for the future.



- Development of a general management plan framework for the "Main Street" or commercial areas along a recognized state freight route that will allow this area to develop as desired by the community, but protects its future as a viable route for freight movement.
- Development of criteria to give funding priority for community enhancements to those communities who have identified highway segment designations and either adopted or agreed to adopt a management plan for these designations along adopted freight routes.

## **SPECIFIC COMMENTS AND TIMELINE**

All of your comments will be provided both to the Freight Route Analysis Project (FRAP) Advisory Committee and to the OTC.

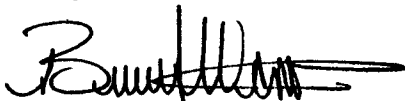
Many of your comments contained questions. Staff has prepared a Frequently Asked Questions document that is available on the freight route website at <http://egov.oregon.gov/ODOT/TD/TP/FRAP.shtml>.

I understand that staff has gathered new information that likely will lead to modifications in the draft report. For example, the agency is in the process of completing a study that is assessing the condition of US 101. That work will further inform the appropriateness of a future freight designation. On the other hand, some have suggested designation of OR 6 and OR 39 as freight routes, which staff had not considered. Those routes are now included in our recommendations. We have also heard opposition and concern to designation of OR 126 east of Springfield to OR 22. The McKenzie Highway is finalizing its Scenic Byway designation and the staff working on the freight issues were unaware of this pending designation. Given this new information, staff has removed this segment of OR 126 (east of its intersection with OR 126 Business) and US 20 between OR 126 and OR 22 from the list of proposed freight routes. The map of recommended freight routes (also available on the freight route website) has been amended to reflect these revised recommendations.

Some stakeholders asked for an extension of the timeline for review of the freight routes. We have extended the timeline for submittal to the OTC until at least mid 2005. While this project is taking longer than anticipated to complete, I believe that the additional work and time will ultimately allow the public, local governments and OTC to support the final result.

I appreciate your continued involvement in this effort and I am confident that we will reach a successful outcome. It is my intent to keep you posted on activities associated with this effort, but in the meantime, feel free to contact staff with any of your concerns.

Sincerely,



Bruce A. Warner  
Director