

Oregon State Senator Lee Beyer comments to Senate Rules Committee. September 21st, 2022

Mr. Chair, members of the committee, I'm the senator of Senate District 6, which is central Lane and Linn counties. And I live in Springfield.

Let me start by thanking the governor for asking me to join the Transportation Commission after I finish up my Senate term here this year. It's something that I'm interested in obviously, as you all know, I have been the chair of the Senate Transportation Committee since 2011. So I have a little bit of experience there.

What you may not know is that before that I served in local government and was deeply involved in transportation planning at the local level, six years on the city council and about 16 years on the planning committee for the city, so I have been very involved in that. And because of that, I have a bias towards local control and the bottoms-up planning system that we use in transportation in the state rather than the top-down so I appreciate that.

My principal interest for wanting to continue is to see the actions that we started in 2017 with the passage of the transportation act, carried out. And those include holding the department accountable to making sure that it carries out the jobs and that we have an efficient department in moving ahead. There are lots of issues there that we have to work on, collectively, the legislature and the department and its commission.

I have heard recently that a lot of people are concerned that I'm only concerned about roads, which is not true. I would draw people's attention back to what we did in 2017, which included the largest infusion in the state's history in expanding transit, a solid commitment that within 10 years, building out all of the safe routes to schools throughout the state, and dedicated funding to off road bicycle paths, along with the monies that we are statutorily committed to using for bicycle routes on the streets. So I have a real commitment to that.

The other thing that I'm really, frankly very interested in is promoting conversion of the passenger fleet to electricity. I think that will happen. My biggest fear these days is not whether people will buy electric vehicles because with where the car manufacturers are going you won't have a choice of that in the very near future, but I want to make sure that Oregon has the charging structure to make that all possible.

So I look forward to working with local communities in meeting their needs and working with the legislature to make sure we have a robust system. One point that I would make is that I am concerned about the roads and I'm concerned about the roads for Oregon's economy. Oregon is an exporting state. And as we heard during our tours in 2016, we need to make sure that our businesses can move their freight up to the ports or wherever and move the freight there. And frankly, the other side of that issue is that a lot of the products that we choose to use and find in our stores, come there on a truck. So keeping all that moving well, I like to say that Oregon's

economy moves on wheels and those wheels need something to roll on. I appreciate your time today, I hope I have your support.