



# BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

1300 NW Wall Street, Bend, Oregon  
(541) 388-6571

FOR RECORDING STAMP ONLY

## DESCHUTES COUNTY LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

8:00 AM

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2026

ZOOM MEETING

A legislative work session was held on Thursday, February 19, 2026 at 8:00 a.m.  
via Zoom Virtual Meeting Platform.

<b>Deschutes County Attendance:</b>			
x	Commissioner Phil Chang, Chair	x	Nick Lelack, County Administrator
x	Commissioner Anthony DeBone, Vice Chair	x	Erik Kropp, Deputy County Administrator
	Commissioner Patti Adair	x	Whitney Hale, Deputy County Administrator
	Kristie Bollinger, Property Manager	x	Tim Brownell, Director Solid Waste
x	Sara Crosswhite, Director 9-1-1	x	Susan DeJoode, Director Human Resources
	Steve Dennison, County Clerk		Chris Doty, Director Road Department
x	David Doyle, Legal Counsel		Charles Fadeley, Justice of the Peace
x	Stephen Gunnels, District Attorney	x	Peter Gutowsky, Director Community Development
x	Holly Harris, Director Health Services		Jeff Curtis, Director Fair & Expo
x	Deevy Holcomb, Director Community Justice	x	Heather Kaisner, Director Public Health
	Sean Kirk, Manager Veteran's Services	x	Bill Kuhn, Treasurer
	Tom Kuhn, Public Health Program Manager		Scot Langton, Assessor
x	Tania Mahood, Director Information Technology	x	Elizabeth Pape, Internal Auditor
x	Jen Patterson, Strategic Initiatives Manager		Lee Randall, Director Facilities

	Kim Riley, Senior Assistant Legal Counsel		Ty Rupert, Sheriff
x	Robert Tintle, Chief Financial Officer		Ryan Dunning, Management Analyst Property Management
x	Will Groves, Planning Manager	x	Heather Herauf, Procurement Manager
	Daniel Kieffer, Budget & Financial Planning Analyst		Zachary Neeman, Information Security Manager
	Jeff Price, Business Manager DCSO		Cody Smith, Assistant Director Road Department
x	Shannon Brister-Raugust, Director Behavioral Health	x	Bryan Husband, Captain Sheriff's Office
x	Angie Powers, BOCC Administrative Assistant		
<b>Others Present:</b>			
x	Doug Riggs, Director NW Policy Advocates	x	Corey Barber, Outreach Director NW Policy Advocates

### 1. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Chang called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

### 2. Commissioner Updates

Commissioner Adair was traveling and unable to attend this meeting.

Commissioner DeBone reported that the Central Oregon Caucus, Regional Business Alliance and other key legislators from the Central Oregon delegation are in Salem today.

### 3. Updates from NW Policy Advocates

Doug Riggs echoed Commissioner DeBone's comments, reporting that Central Oregon indeed has good representation in the Capitol today. J Bar J Youth Services will be in the building, and Riggs will provide them with a tour and plans to thank legislators for their advocacy for the regional youth psychiatric facility funding.

Related to transportation, the proposal to balance ODOT's budget has yet to be released. Additionally, the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) and state funding process reform bill failed on Monday night.

**SB 1599** would move the gas tax referendum from the November to the May ballot. When it came up on the floor yesterday, Republicans did not return from their caucus meeting. For **SB 1599** to pass, it would need to pass the House and Senate and be signed by the governor by February 25<sup>th</sup>. Riggs highlighted a recent

constitutional amendment which disallows legislators to run for office again if they walk out for more than 10 days.

**SB 1544** was amended to include the Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council (COIC) qualified entity language, allowing COIC to accept transit taxes directly thus reducing administrative burden for counties and tribes. This amendment passed unanimously through committee. Chair Chang and Commissioner DeBone both expressed their support for this bill, requesting that it be added to the Bill Tracker Report.

**HB 3144** would increase Transient Lodging Tax (TLT) to pay for wildlife conservation efforts. This bill passed through committee and is expected to be on the House floor soon.

**HB 4048** is the main TLT bill and is currently up for a vote. Association of Oregon Counties (AOC) and the League of Oregon Cities (LOC) both expect this bill to get to the floor. This bill allows for flexibility but does not mandate it. Tintle added that some amendments were proposed, and the Dash 7 amendment will likely move forward. This amendment includes a 50/50 split and would enable resiliency grants to be provided out of tourism dollars, for lodging and dining establishments.

Riggs noted that as of Wednesday, the short session is halfway through, and the constitutional deadline for the session to wrap up is March 8. As with the unknown transportation budget, it is also unclear how legislators plan to balance the \$600 million budget deficit.

Riggs reported that Commissioner Adair testified in support of the Terrebonne Sanitary District's funding request on Friday. He noted that 127 requests were made, and it is unclear how many of these will be funded. Due to a high unemployment rate in the building trades, there is a strong desire among legislators to get people to work.

The East Cascades Workforce Board receives money through prosperity programs, such as Future Ready. This funding expires on July 1<sup>st</sup>. Favorably, the statutory authority to keep funding through local boards passed the senate floor.

Riggs emphasized that there is currently no walkout in the House. Responding to Commissioner DeBone, the House is reading some controversial bills on the floor but are waiving the reading of bills that are generally agreed upon.

Responding to Chair Chang's question related to the March 8 deadline, Riggs said that the governor can call a special session under certain circumstances and for a singular purpose, but the Senate would need a quorum.

#### 4. Review Bill Tracker Report by Department

Jen Patterson reminded that there will not be a Legislative Update at 8 a.m. on Thursday, February 26 and they will instead discuss legislative topics during the regularly scheduled Board meeting on February 25 at 1:00 p.m. after the lunch break.

Patterson noted an urgent request from AOC which came through over the weekend, asking for the addition of Deschutes County's logo onto a letter opposing **HB 4007**, particularly the Dash 17 amendment. This bill relates to transportation and would deprive cities and counties of state-shared revenue for safe routes to schools.

Chair Chang indicated that he received the letter from County staff. Although he was not the only one to receive it, he may have been the only one to respond and AOC interpreted Commissioner Chang's response, in support of opposition, as the County's position as a whole.

Patterson indicated that AOC proceeded to submit this letter to committee members, but not as testimony. Patterson added that the Dash 17 amendment is dead. Noting that this bill had not yet been discussed by the BOCC at a Legislative Update meeting, Chris Doty had recommended a position of priority 3 / watch. Riggs added that the Eastern Oregon Counties Association (EOCA) and Umatilla County also signed onto the letter, and he has had conversations with AOC to clarify the appropriate process moving forward.

Commissioner DeBone indicated his support for opposition to the Dash 17 amendment. Chair Chang questioned the incomplete policy position of taking away funding for safe routes to schools without providing an alternate funding mechanism.

Peter Gutowsky discussed **HB 4082**, which adds a one-time UGB expansion to meet certain housing requirements for seniors and households earning less than 120% AMI. Riggs expects this bill to pass, as it is aligned with other temporary UGB expansion legislation from last session, noting that this bill has Average Median Income (AMI) and acreage requirements.

Responding to Chair Chang, who spoke about an effort to tinker with last session's bill to drop the criteria from "severely rent-burdened" to "rent burdened", Riggs said that this fix is in a technical corrections housing bill, but he is unclear at this time and will research the topic further. Chair Chang suggested tracking the omnibus bill, as this would shift land use authority out of the counties and into the cities to build

much needed housing. Chair Chang added that the City of Sisters could utilize these programs for projects such as McKenzie Meadows. Jen Patterson will add this to next week's Bill Tracker Report.

Tintle raised awareness about **HB 4178**, which would allow for counties to adopt a policy for transactions, rounding to the nearest \$0.05 since pennies are no longer under production by the U.S. Treasury. This bill would provide for a consistent framework across the state. Board position: priority 2 / support.

Holly Harris spoke about **HB 4070**, which is a technical fix bill that would streamline administrative requirements and clarify rules. Harris wants a fix related to language requiring Community Mental Health Providers (CMHPs) to pay for psychiatric care even without adequate funding, as it is critical not to have unfunded mandates for CMHPs. Additionally, Harris wants a fix for language related to medical "assessments" for crisis stabilization centers, changing the language instead to medical "screenings" for compliance purposes.

Another large issue relates to unlicensed clinicians providing telehealth appointments. Unlicensed clinicians from all over the country are providing telehealth appointments for patients across Deschutes County and Oregon, and billing Medicaid. Responding to Chair Chang, Harris indicated her support for the additional advocacy by the BOCC.

Patterson pivoted back to the discussion related to **HB 1544**, asking for Board direction.

DEBONE: Move approval of a letter of support for **HB 1544**, related to STIF funding going directly to COIC as the qualified entity

CHANG: Second

VOTE: DEBONE: Yes

CHANG: Yes

ADAIR: Absent. Motion carried 2-0.

Once the letter is signed, Riggs will share it with the House Transportation Committee.

**Next Meeting:** The next virtual legislative update will take place at 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 25<sup>th</sup> following the lunch break during the BOCC's regularly scheduled meeting.

**Adjourn:** Chair Chang adjourned the meeting at 8:43 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:

  
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**Angie Powers, Administrative Assistant**