



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 12, 2026

ZOOM MEETING

A legislative work session was held on Thursday, February 12, 2026 at 8:00 a.m.
via Zoom Virtual Meeting Platform.

Deschutes County Attendance:

x	Commissioner Phil Chang, Chair	x	Nick Lelack, County Administrator
x	Commissioner Anthony DeBone, Vice Chair	x	Erik Kropp, Deputy County Administrator
x	Commissioner Patti Adair	x	Whitney Hale, Deputy County Administrator
x	Kristie Bollinger, Property Manager	x	Tim Brownell, Director Solid Waste
x	Sara Crosswhite, Director 9-1-1		Jeff Curtis, Director Fair & Expo
x	Susan Dejoode, Director Human Resources		Steve Dennison, County Clerk
x	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 Behavioral Health
x	Deevy Holcomb, Director Community Justice	x	Heather Kaisner, Director Public Health
	Sean Kirk, Manager Veteran's Services	x	Bill Kuhn, Treasurer
x	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	x	Lee Randall, Director Facilities

	Kim Riley, Senior Assistant Legal Counsel		Ty Rupert, Sheriff
	Robert Tittle, Chief Financial Officer	x	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	x	Cody Smith, Assistant Director Road Department
x	Shannon Brister-Raugust, Deputy Director Health Services	x	Angie Powers, BOCC Administrative Assistant
Others Present:			
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

Noting some of the comments she has heard in opposition to the farm bill, Commissioner Adair asked Riggs for an update. Riggs noted that the bulk of opposition is to larger retail operations in EFU zones, while proponents of the bill highlight the need for additional revenue streams for farmers. Opponents in the Hood River Valley and the Gorge do not want development outside the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). A work session is scheduled for February 16th.

Chair Chang commented that the Friends of Family Farmers oppose the bill. He cited a pear farmer and county commissioner in the Hood River Valley who opposes the bill. While appreciating opportunities for additional revenue streams for farmers, she believes this bill would ultimately increase the value of farms, making them out of reach for new and emerging farmers.

Responding to Chair Chang, Gutowsky spoke about other pathways for farm owners to take advantage of diversifying revenue streams. Kaisner commented that this bill has little to no impact to the Environmental Health division of Health Services, so her department's stance on this bill is neutral.

3. Updates from NW Policy Advocates

Doug Riggs provided a brief update. Bills are beginning to move, following a late start due in part to a delay in getting bills into OLIS. The OLIS system recently

crashed for the fourth time, and committees are experiencing difficulties staying online.

Despite being up from the end of session forecast, the revenue forecast reflects a \$600 million deficit. Responding to Chair Chang, Riggs spoke about Medicaid and SNAP benefits funding.

Related to transportation, a bill has advanced which will move the referendum from the November to the May ballot. A simple majority vote will be required, and it is expected to pass barring a walkout.

A controversial gun measure would increase proposed owner registration fees from \$55 to \$120 per weapon, in addition to an annual test requirement.

4. Review Bill Tracker Report by Department

Jen Patterson introduced the week's Bill Tracker Report.

Jen Patterson noted that an additional column, labeled as "Tagged", was added to the Bill Tracker report. Those bills listed as "Reviewed" indicate they have been reviewed and a determination has been made by a majority of the Board of Commissioners on their priority and position.

Patterson noted that Commissioner DeBone would like to discuss **HB 4134**, and Commissioner Adair wishes to speak about a COVO consideration so she will ensure there is time to discuss these items near the end of this meeting.

Tim Brownell spoke about **HB 4144**, which was rolled over from the last legislative session and relates to battery producer responsibility for collection and recycling of batteries by July 2029. Related to issues around Lithium-Ion batteries, Knott Landfill averages one fire per week. Brownell noted that when run over by a compactor, Lithium-Ion batteries can explode and there are additional concerns over the possibility of hidden underground fires. Responding to Chair Chang, Brownell reported there were 54 Lithium-Ion battery fires at Knott Landfill over the past year. Brownell noted that embedded batteries (in devices, not easily removed) are exempt from requirements of this bill. Rep. Levy and Sen. Broadman are sponsors of this bill. Riggs said that a national battery industry association testified in support of this bill, noting that this bill is modeled after others nationwide. Board position: priority 2 / support.

Chris Doty spoke about **SB 1542**, urging opposition. The bill encumbers ODOT with more rules and regulations, and additional rules and regulations are contributing factors to ODOT's current dire funding situation. As ODOT is currently lacking a

leader, adding more rules and regulations is not beneficial. Doty said that a bipartisan approach is necessary for any legislation to be productive.

Chair Chang provided his perspective, as a sitting member of the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC), stating that it is unnecessary to codify or add dimension to the Capital Investment Plan (CIP) process, and it is only adding administrative burden.

Riggs summarized ODOT's comments from a recent hearing. ODOT representatives testified that should this bill pass, rulemaking would take 1.5 years and projects would be placed on hold. There is skepticism on both sides of the aisle, and this bill is scheduled for a work session next week. Board position: priority 3 /oppose.

Chair Chang spoke briefly about another bill for OTC's approval of issuance of debt from ODOT for capital projects. The fundamental problem is that the legislature has created an inadequate funding mechanism for maintenance and capital projects.

Commissioner Adair expressed disappointment that ODOT does not yet have a new leader. She commented on the poor condition of many roads across the state.

Doty spoke about a Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) opportunity, which is due by midnight on February 25th. He highlighted the intersections of OR-126 (Highland) and Helmholtz Way coupled with the City of Redmond's 35th and Highland intersection. The opening of Redmond's new recreation center will put further strain on 35th/Highland.

A CDS from Rep. Bynum's office recently steered \$250,000 towards the intersection but this is insufficient. The remainder of the necessary funding request has been attached to OR-126/Helmholtz Way. The application is being finalized, and it will be discussed at next week's Redmond City Council meeting. The Board expressed its unanimous support.

DEBONE: Move approval of the CDS request for \$4.25 million for OR-126/Helmholtz and 35th/Highland future projects for intersection improvements

ADAIR: Second

VOTE: DEBONE: Yes

ADAIR: Yes

CHANG: Chair votes yes. Motion carried 3-0

Whitney Hale spoke about **SB 1569**, which would expand PERS' definition of "Police" to impact local and state government. 14 employees in Juvenile Community Justice

and 3 employees in the Sheriffs' Office, would change their designation thus increasing costs to the County. Based on a financial analysis, the 17 employees impacted would equate to an annual estimated cost increase of \$74,000. Hale added that AOC and LOC oppose this bill. Board position: oppose.

Patterson shared that the Terrebonne Sanitary District reached out to Commissioner Adair related to **HB 5701**, as it relates to a Community Initiated Project (CIP) funding request. Riggs noted this is for additional projects at the end of session. Commissioner Adair reminded that she tried to get \$2.5 million for Terrebonne Sanitary District during the last legislative session, and Patterson said they are submitting a grant application requesting \$4 million for the construction of their wastewater collection system. The Board expressed their unanimous support and directed staff to draft a letter. Patterson will draft a letter, to go before the Board at their regular meeting on Wednesday.

Commissioner DeBone spoke about **HB 4134**, increasing state transient lodging tax. It provides for a matrix of funding, similar to a Christmas tree bill. AOC took a narrow position of support for wolf depredation funding. COIC is requesting a letter of support for Heart of Oregon Corp's fuels reduction work.

Chair Chang expressed his desire to support or not support the bill in its entirety, rather than only pieces, and he leans towards supporting the bill. Commissioner Adair said that counties are devastated by the impacts of wolves to the cattle industry, and the bill has her support. Board position: priority 2 / support.

Riggs highlighted three outdoor recreation bills: **HB 4071**, **HB 1517**, and **HB 1593**. **HB 1593** is the main ski recreation bill which deals with recreational immunity and is more comprehensive as it applies to other recreational business owners such as river rafters, releasing operators from claims for ordinary negligence. Riggs expects that this bill will move. Ski resorts across the state are supportive of this bill, with Riggs noting there is only one national insurance company willing to provide insurance to Oregon ski resorts. Board position: priority 1 / support.

Patterson introduced the concept of a letter to Washington, D.C. from Central Oregon Veterans Outreach (COVO). Commissioner Adair said the letter is for supporting services for programs for veterans and their families. Prior to signing on to support the letter, Chair Chang requested to review it. Commissioner Adair will provide a copy of the letter to the other commissioners, and Patterson will present the letter to the Board for their consideration at their Wednesday meeting.

Chair Chang commented on the administrative burden bill. While he was in Salem on Monday, he discussed Holly Harris' comprehensive table with Rep. Kropf and Rep. Levy. He shared that Rep. Levy indicated this bill is on a good track for moving

forward. Harris noted that this bill is a small step in the right direction towards reducing administrative burden. However, there is much more work to be done and much of this is not legislative, but rather falls under the control of OHA and DAS.

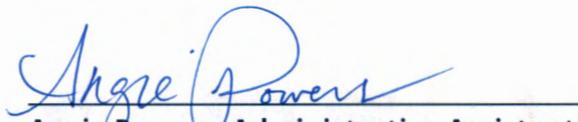
Riggs indicated that it will be known by Monday at noon which bills are alive and which are dead.

Riggs shared there is a bill under consideration which would limit long session bill counts to 25 per legislator, representing a significant reduction. This bill has bipartisan support.

Next Meeting: The next virtual legislative update meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 19th at 8:00 a.m.

Adjourn: Chair Chang adjourned the meeting at 9:03 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:



Angie Powers, Administrative Assistant