



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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

FOR RECORDING STAMP ONLY

DESCHUTES COUNTY LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

8:00 AM

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2025

ZOOM MEETING

A legislative work session was held on Friday, February 21, 2025 at 8:00 a.m. via Zoom Virtual Meeting Platform.

Deschutes County Attendance:			
x	Commissioner Anthony DeBone, Chair	x	Nick Lelack, County Administrator
x	Commissioner Patti Adair, Vice Chair	x	Erik Kropp, Deputy County Administrator
x	Commissioner Phil Chang	x	Whitney Hale, Deputy County Administrator
x	Kristie Bollinger, Property Manager		Tim Brownell, Director Solid Waste
	Sara Crosswhite, Director 9-1-1		Steve Dennison, County Clerk
x	Chris Doty, Director Road Department		David Doyle, Legal Counsel
	Charles Fadeley, Justice of the Peace	x	Janice Garceau, Director Health Services
x	Stephen Gunnels, District Attorney	x	Peter Gutowsky, Director Community Development
x	Holly Harris, Director Behavioral Health	x	Geoff Hinds, 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
x	Tom Kuhn, Public Health Program Manager		Scot Langton, Assessor
	Tania Mahood, Director Information Technology	x	Kevin Moriarty, Forester
x	Elizabeth Pape, Internal Auditor	x	Jen Patterson, Strategic Initiatives Manager

x	Angie Powers, BOCC Administrative Assistant	x	Lee Randall, Director Facilities
x	Kim Riley, Senior Assistant Legal Counsel	x	Robert Tintle, Chief Financial Officer
	Kent van der Kamp, Sheriff		Aaron Wells, Undersheriff
	Heather Herauf, Procurement Manager		Daniel Kieffer, Budget & Financial Planning Analyst
	Cody Smith, Assistant Director Road Department		
Others Present:			
x	Doug Riggs, Director NW Policy Advocates	x	Corey Barber, Outreach Director NW Policy Advocates
	Emma Innes, Associate NW Policy Advocates		

1. Welcome and Introductions

Chair DeBone called the meeting to order at 8:01 a.m.

2. Commissioner Updates

Commissioner Adair is pleased to see legislation on juniper removal. Commissioner Chang noted that although the budget environment is uncertain, there is an opportunity for transportation projects as he's learned in his role on the Oregon Transportation Commission. There is also formula funding from the gas tax, for transportation projects.

Chair DeBone spoke about rural property owner representation, and wildfire hazard map appeals.

3. Updates from NW Policy Advocates

Doug Riggs provided an update on the transportation package, which is delayed due in part to the establishment of an Accountability Subcommittee who is currently examining the fall audit.

4. Review Bill Tracker Report by Department

Chair DeBone said that **HB 2169** establishes state policy on water reuse. The City of Bend has a water reclamation facility, with reused water utilized for golf courses. Riggs noted there will be dramatic cuts in the water resources department due to a budget shortfall. Board position: priority 2/support.

DA Gunnels said that **HB 3556** would allow counties to use Transient Room Tax (TRT) to fund public safety. This would provide an additional funding stream to the DA's Office, the Sheriff's Office and Community Justice. Lelack sees this bill as providing more local authority over TRT allocation. Riggs said that the Association of Oregon Counties and the League of Oregon Cities introduced this as a TRT flexibility bill. This is one bill which will be a vehicle for TRT flexibility, adding that TRT uses are community specific. While Central Oregon may wish to focus on public safety and public tourism facilities, coastal communities seek flexibility for housing those working in the tourism industry.

Responding to Commissioner Chang, Commissioner Adair has not heard this bill discussed in depth during Visit Central Oregon Board meetings, though high rental costs and high rental vacancy rates are a frequent topic of discussion. Lelack echoed Commissioner Adair's sentiments, adding that the topic was brought up very briefly during a Visit Bend roundtable.

Responding to Deevy Holcomb's comments, Chair DeBone spoke about opportunities for Community Justice Juvenile to invest some of these dollars into youth community service projects such as graffiti cleanup, should funds be available. Chris Doty added that they are about to spend \$10 million on projects in and around Sunriver, which are primarily driven by tourism.

Tintle said this bill would free up how we can use the *discretionary* portion of our TRT. Board position: priority 1/support.

Harris said **HB 2015** and **HB 2202** reduce administrative burden and revise the statutory language. Garceau said that not requiring signature on certain intake documents is one tangible change. To date, no relief has been experienced due to redundant reporting requirements. Bureaucratic costs require staff at the state and local levels to micro-regulate, and a deep dive will be required for meaningful change. Board position: priority 2/support.

Riggs said that **HB 2088** relates to property tax foreclosure. Of three related bills, he believes at least one to move but they do not incorporate the changes recommended by the work group. Bollinger added that Property Management, Finance and County Legal are united in their position on this bill. Board position: oppose unless amended.

Responding to Commissioner Adair, Riggs said he is hopeful the fair bills will be one of the legislative priorities at the end of the session. The deadline for bills to come out of their committees of origin is 5 to 6 weeks from now.

Chair DeBone shared his experiences while at the Capitol this week. Responding to Lelack, he asked to add a wildfire hazard map appeal discussion to the upcoming Board agenda.

Patterson spoke about two letters of support which were discussed at Wednesday's Board of Commissioners meeting. These are from the La Pine Rural Fire Protection District asking for Congressionally directed spending to purchase a 100-foot ladder truck (\$1.6 million) and a wildland type 3 fire engine (\$550k). Commissioner Adair shared that Sunriver has a 75-foot ladder truck and a mutual aid agreement with the La Pine fire Rural Fire Protection District. Commissioner Chang added it is important to consider probabilities, as La Pine only has one three-story building. Chair DeBone and Commissioner Adair expressed support for the wildland fire engine letter only, and Commissioner Chang was not interested in supporting any additional congressionally directed spending requests.

Garceau asked the Board if any future information requests include specifically what information is needed, by when and for what purpose so that she and other department heads can prioritize requests. Once information is received, it would also be helpful to know if it was received, if it was helpful and if there are any further questions.

Next Meeting: The next virtual legislative update meeting is scheduled for Friday, February 28 at 8:00 a.m.

Adjourn: Chair DeBone adjourned the meeting at 8:47 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:



Angie Powers, Administrative Assistant