

# 2018 Legislative Initiatives in Transportation Infrastructure

## Funding and Finance

### Webinar Q & A



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**For Oregon: Would the local governments have the same "strings attached" to the funds on project delivery that would impact if the gas tax increases?**

**Travis Brouwer** -- There are a number of strings that are attached to these increases in the motor fuel taxes. For local governments the strings are less significant than those imposed on ODOT. ODOT is obligated to meet a number of requirements including delivering some specific projects and implementing reforms imposed by advisory committees. For local governments, the primary requirement is that they follow state guidelines that our State Transportation Commission has promulgated on measuring the condition of bridges and pavement and reporting that to the state. All of that information will be available on an accountability and performance website so that taxpayers and legislators can see what their investments are actually getting them in terms of the quality of bridges and pavements across the state.

**For Utah: You mentioned that Utah now has the authority to toll existing lanes; do you have to follow any state or federal processes to toll these existing lanes?**

**Senator Harper** -- Yes, we will still have to follow all that. What we did was remove a state statute that did not allow the department of transportation to even ask for that clearance from the feds.

**Were there other revenue mechanisms considered, besides the ones that ended up being included in your funding package?**

**Christy Hall** -- The idea of tolls was one of the ideas that I was asked the studying following the passage of the legislation and report back to the general assembly. So that item is still out there. Otherwise, I think we got most everything that was attractive to our general assembly in the package.

**Travis Brouwer** -- In Oregon we actually created something like four new taxes. So most of the ideas that were put on the table were eventually incorporated into the package. The one mechanism that wasn't included was the idea of congestion relief districts. These would give local communities, at the metropolitan region level, the ability to provide significant resources for congestion relief projects with a matching fund from the state if they were able to raise their own local gas tax and registration fees. So it would have created greater authority for them to raise those fees and provided state matching funds. That was not included but there is interest in coming back to this idea in the future to provide that local authority to address congestion needs at a regional level.

**Senator Harper** -- In Utah we did take a look at other funding mechanisms like the bicycle tax and congestion pricing, but what was in the bill were the items around which there was sufficient consensus to pass. And during our task force starting later this week, we'll be looking at those additional funding mechanisms we didn't get agreement on previously.

**For Oregon: You said tolling is several years away in Oregon, what steps are being taken toward tolling?**

**Travis Brouwer** -- We are moving forward as quickly as possible toward implementing tolling. Right now we are going through the process of figuring out where to toll and what type of tolling. Simultaneously we are beginning the system development work including on-road lane, back office, and customer support systems. We are also going to need to update our tolling policies and legislation and building organizational capacity.

**For Utah: What will your mileage based user fee pilot project entail?**

**Senator Harper** -- Our intent is that by September of next year the people who are paying the electric vehicle fee will have the option to pay the increased EV fee or use the road usage charge. We are beginning with the electric vehicle group and will then offer it up to others.

**Aside from the legislature and the DOT, can you talk more about stakeholders who were important to the passage of your funding package and how they were involved?**

**Christy Hall** -- Four or five years before we got traction on funding in South Carolina, our chambers of commerce, contracting industry, and materials suppliers formed a nonprofit group. It was set up to advocate for funding for roads and bridges. They were instrumental because they could do things the state DOT couldn't do. One of the most effective things they did was taking out advertisements at a major golf tournament which got a lot of public attention. They also did outreach into individual communities. The chamber set up regional forums so the state DOT could come in and talk about issues in the communities and the plans for the new funding.

**Senator Harper** -- In Utah, we've had a lot of involvement from our trucking association, contractors, development groups. We brought them together along with the association of cities, the counties, the chamber of commerce groups, CEOs of major companies, and others. That group followed the bill through the legislative process and met with legislators. It was a dedicated core group of people who made this possible.

**Travis Brouwer** -- Oregon has a similar story. The Oregon Transportation forum, formed out of what used to be the Oregon Highway Users Alliance, is a very broad based multimodal transportation stakeholders group. While they don't always reach consensus, they have proved a very useful forum to get all the stakeholders on the same page. The group includes users, truckers, AAA, environmental groups, transit providers, local governments, bicycle and pedestrian advocates, folks working on public health initiatives. They were able to create consensus around a very broad, multimodal funding package. Rather than collapsing under its own weight there was actually a virtuous cycle as more people came to the table the package became broader and deepened its support. We were able to get approximately two-thirds majorities in both chambers of our legislature behind this legislation.