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Congress of the United States
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April 14, 2006

Jason A. Tell
Policy & Planning Manager
Region 1
Oregon Department of Transportation
123 NW Flanders Street
Portland, OR 97209-4012

Subject: Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

Dear Jason,

I am writing to weigh in during the public comment period as you evaluate the priorities that should be included in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). I ask that you reconsider your draft and include completion of the widening of Highway 217 in Washington County.

The first step in including Highway 217 improvements in the STIP will be to support funds for an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for this project. At the request of the Westside Economic Alliance and Washington County officials, I have requested \$3 million in funds for Fiscal Year 2007 to assist with this essential first step.

I view Interstate 5 (I-5) as the aorta of Oregon's transportation system. If I-5 is Oregon's aorta, the tri-county Portland metro area is Oregon's economic heart. As I-5 enters Oregon's economic heart, it depends on Highways 217 and 26 as crucial coronary arteries.

In the next twenty years, Oregon's Department of Transportation estimates traffic on Highways 217 and 26 will increase by about two-thirds. The current and future state of Oregon's economic health will be threatened if Interstate 5, Highway 217, or Highway 26 is ignored. Improvements to Highway 217 will keep Oregon's economic engine running by reducing traffic congestion to improve the flow of commerce. If traffic slows to a standstill, so too will business. Truly, the economy of all of Oregon depends upon the efficient transit of commerce in the Portland Metropolitan area.

There has been some discussion among transportation interests in Oregon of taking a piecemeal approach to improving transit along this vital artery. Some

discouraging estimates have placed the timetable for completion as late as the year 2089. This demonstrates a lack of vision and leadership at a time when Oregon's economy needs courage and strong leaders.

I strongly support a sound regional transportation policy that includes improvements to Highway 217 and Highway 26. These transportation improvements will enhance the quality of life on a daily basis for residents.

Because Highway 217 is such a high priority, it only makes common sense to include it in the STIP and support an EIS. I look forward to working with you on establishing the EIS funds to start the improvement process on Highway 217.

Very truly yours,



David Wu
Member of Congress

cc:

Matthew Garrett, Director
Oregon Department of Transportation

Stuart Foster, Chairman
Oregon Transportation Commission

Ted Kulongoski, Governor
State of Oregon