

**HIGHLIGHTS OF THE OWIN HEARING BEFORE THE  
TRANSPORTATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
JOINT SUBCOMMITTEE THURSDAY 21 MAY 2009**

Co Chair Senator Betsy Johnson and Lorna Youngs  
ODOT Deputy Director

**Senator Johnson: “Ms. Youngs, I think ODOT has been asked to develop some other scenarios as part of appropriate contingencies planning. But does ODOT...I mean....you’re fully invested partners in OWIN and prepared to go ahead?”**

**Lorna Yongs: “Absolutely, Senator Johnson.”**

Yamhill County Commissioner Kathy George

**“I’ve been a Commissioner for six and a half years and one of the things I understand is budgeting and how tough it is in hard times like we have right now. But through those six and a half years, there have been a number of natural disasters that have hit Oregon. Especially in the northwest regions. We’ve had floods, ice storms, wind storms. We’ve also had a number of local and regional and statewide emergency management exercises. And in every single one of those the thing that has failed has been the communications. And I think we see that on a national level also where people did not have a way to talk to each other during emergencies.**

**As elected officials, citizens are expecting us to make sure that things work when there are those kinds of emergencies. I, for one, and I’m sure that you feel the same way, don’t want to be standing in front of the microphone or TV camera saying, ‘Well...um....’, especially if some lives are in danger or other terrible things have happened. We want the systems to be in place as soon as we can make it possible.**

**I feel very confident that having been on the SIEC (State Interoperability Executive Council) and now OWIN (Steering Committee) for a number of years that much has been done to partner with the local and private agencies that have towers or are working on radios.**

**What concerns me is that if we're not able to move forward, as Lindsay (Ball – OWIN Director) has been talking about this morning, we won't just lose those partnerships temporarily, we're probably going to lose them permanently."**

**Matthew Garrett ODOT Director**

**"The bottom line: we are a committed partner in this effort. When I break this conversation down to its simplest point, this is about safety. This is about insuring that the men and women of ODOT and our partners....when they click that button in a time of emergency or crisis that there's someone on the other end to answer. It is that simple to me. I think it's a good investment. We need a comprehensive, interoperable system."**

**Representative Mike Schaufler**

**"I remember, Madam Chair, when we were at the Emergency Oceanic Policy Committee, we had a very interesting Committee hearing. We're spending a lot of money here and I just thought well, rather than just looking at a line in the budget....especially for those who haven't been through this, maybe it would be a good idea if we talked about it.**

**It (OWIN) is a great idea. I definitely....if I'm on the coast I hope we're 500 feet up off the shore. And if things go to hell in a hand basket I want you all to be able to talk to one another."**

**Co Chair Senator Betsy Johnson**

**"I have followed OWIN closely and one of the reasons I ended up on the Legislative advisors group is that as a member of the E Board, I voted to suspend funding for OWIN at one point in time.**

**OWIN was moving ahead. There were several of us who had considerable doubts that this was organized satisfactorily, that the money was being spent appropriately. And back in September of last year, I was joined by a majority of my colleagues and we suspended funding. And since then several things have happened. Not the least of which is that now there is an information technology person embedded in LFO (Legislative Fiscal Office). So no longer are we relying on agencies. We have an independent eye, whose only customer is the Legislature, to tell us whether or not an information technology program or a technical program like this one is on track.**

**Make no mistake, this is expensive. But I think Mr. Ball has drawn to our attention the fact that we don't have any choice. In a very short time, there will be no bandwidth. And the bandwidth has been sold. So it's not out of the realm of possibility that an officer alone in high pursuit on some distant road in Representative Huffman's area (The Dalles/Wasco County) could turn on his radio and get the local country and western station.**

**This is serious stuff. And OWIN and the way it's organized is our best chance to get up to speed when we lose that width. From the perspective of someone who had considerable doubts about this program at one time, my concerns have been assuaged and I know Mr. Cummings and the LFO is watching these guys like a hawk. And he gave OWIN good marks to the Capital Construction Committee last night."**

**Lindsay Ball OWIN Director**

**"I just want to bring everyone's attention to a point of history. My personal experience. I reported for duty with the Oregon State Police on June 12, 1972 in the Tillamook office. One of the things that happened that first day was that Sergeant Harold Cottrey took us out and taught us how to talk on the radio. It's the same radio today. That was 37 years ago. Think of how the technology has changed in your personal lives, in tools that you use with communications technology. I think the men and women who serve this State deserve better."**

