

# Legislators pursue changing the appointment authority for ODOT

Governor would no longer appoint

By **PARIS ACHEN**  
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Legislators on a joint committee to craft a transportation package plan to propose shifting authority to appoint the director of the Oregon Department of Transportation from the governor to the Oregon Transportation Commission.

“If you are going to have entity with fiduciary responsibility, they need the ability to appoint the CEO,” said state Sen. Lee Beyer, D-Eugene, the committee co-chairman.

Under the proposal, the five-member commission would appoint the director “in consultation with the governor.”

The proposal is one part of a transportation package that would raise about \$8 billion over the next 10 years to pay for projects to relieve congestion and maintain roads and bridges.

The 14-member committee met over the past two weeks to refine points they wanted to include in the legislation, which legislative counsel is in the process of drafting. Lawmakers emphasized that their agreement for the first draft of



Paris Achen/Capital Bureau  
Left to right, Sens. Brian Boquist, R-Dallas, and Lee Beyer, D-Springfield, talk at the Oregon Capitol earlier this month before their presentation on the transportation package.

the legislation did not necessarily indicate their support for all of the provisions. Many of the finer points will be hashed out after the first draft is completed. Co-chairwoman Rep. Caddy McKeown, D-Coos Bay, estimated the first draft would be finished by the end of May, with public hearings scheduled afterwards.

The money for the plan would come from a combination of hikes in the gas tax and registration and license fees, tolls and new taxes on payroll and purchases of new vehicles and bicycles. The legislation also would require a website where taxpayers could follow the progress and budgets of projects in their area and create an independent staff for the Oregon Transportation Com-

mission, which sets policy for ODOT.

Tammy Baney, the commission’s chairwoman, earlier this year asked Gov. Kate Brown for a separate staff and for more involvement in the appointment of the ODOT director.

The plan identifies a few specific projects to ease congestion, but other projects would be prioritized by the Oregon Transportation Commission. Specific projects would:

- Add lanes on Interstate 5 near Portland’s Rose Quarter from Interstate 84 to Interstate 405.
- Add northbound and southbound lanes on Highway 217 through the Portland metro area.

- Widen Interstate 205 to six lanes from Oregon City to Stafford Road.
- Widen and seismically reinforce Interstate 205’s Abernethy Bridge.

The plan raises an average of about \$800 million per year in additional transportation funding.

The money would come from increases in the gas tax and vehicle fees and a set of new taxes over the next 10 years, including:

- Gas tax increase from 30 cents to 44 cents.
- Tiered increase in title and registration fees, with higher increases for fuel-efficient vehicles, which pay less in gas taxes.
- Statewide payroll tax of one-tenth of 1 percent to pay for mass transit.
- Tolls to be determined.
- Bicycle excise tax of 5 percent.
- Dealer privilege tax of 1 percent on new vehicle purchases.

The state spends about \$1.3 billion a year on transportation system maintenance and upgrades. This proposal would bring that amount up to about \$2.1 billion.

The committee’s co-chairs have estimated a vote on the package could happen as early as mid-June.

*The Capital Bureau is a collaboration between EO Media Group and Pamplin Media Group.*

# State House approves tighter tracking for medical marijuana

Discourages diversion to illegal market

By **PARIS ACHEN**  
Capital Bureau



Pamplin Media Group

The state House Monday passed a bill 51-7 that requires medical marijuana to undergo the same tight-looped tracking as the recreational product.

“The core purpose of this bill is to make sure that we eliminate the illegal market by enhancing tracking and other associated things that will prevent diversion from Oregon’s legal marijuana sector to the illegal market,” said state Rep. Ann Lininger, D-Lake Oswego, co-chairwoman of the Joint Committee on Marijuana Regulation.

The effort to pass the reforms took on more urgency after the Trump administration indicated it could crack down on marijuana commerce in states where the drug has been legalized, legislators have indicated.

The requirement is the most significant of several tweaks the bill makes to Oregon’s marijuana regulations.

The Senate passed the bill 23-6 earlier this month.

Under existing law, medical producers, processors, wholesalers and retailers have to self-report to the Oregon Health Authority how much marijuana they have. The bill requires all of that product to be tracked with a bar code or computer chip that follows the plant from a seedling to its final product.

The bill exempts medical marijuana cardholders and home growers from the tracking requirements.

The legislation also requires:

- Oregon Health Authority to create an electronic database to track medical marijuana cardholder activity and to share that information with the Department of Revenue and the Oregon Liquor Control Commission.
- Adding two commissioners to the liquor commission from Eastern Oregon and western Oregon.
- Financial disclosures to the liquor commission by people with a financial interest in a marijuana business applying for a license.
- The liquor commission to pursue disciplinary action against a former licensee even if the license has been revoked or suspended. The liquor commission previously did not have that enforcement authority over former licensees.

*The Capital Bureau is a collaboration between EO Media Group and Pamplin Media Group.*

# Child welfare director resigns after six months

By **CLAIRE WITHYCOMBE**  
Capital Bureau

SALEM — The director of Oregon’s beleaguered child welfare division of the state Department of Human Services is stepping down after six months on the job.

Lena Alhusseini, who joined the agency in early November after it conducted a national search, submitted her resignation as child welfare director Wednesday afternoon.

She did not return a phone message seeking comment. A department spokesman declined Friday to provide answers to further questions about Alhusseini’s departure.

She will stay on at the agency, leading an effort to recruit diverse employees, until September.

Department of Human Services Director Clyde Saiki announced Alhusseini’s departure in a statement Friday.

“I respect Lena’s vision for child welfare — a framework of community engagement and support — and that essential work will continue,” Saiki said. “However, Lena and I agree that we have not been able to get the results we need to achieve.”

Saiki himself is retiring in September. He will be replaced by the director of the Oregon Youth Authority, the state’s agency overseeing juveniles in the criminal justice system.



Submitted Photo

Lena Alhusseini has resigned as director of Oregon’s beleaguered child welfare division of the state Department of Human Services. She joined the agency in early November.

Both departures come as the Department of Human Services struggles to recover after significant documented problems in child welfare. Starting in 2015, news reports revealed the agency did a poor job monitoring management and safety issues at a Portland foster care provider, prompting further scrutiny of the system and calls for a culture change at the agency.

Under Alhusseini’s direction, which began shortly after the agency released a detailed outside report on the foster care system’s shortcomings, the division seemed eager to make improvements.

Alhusseini came to Oregon from Brooklyn, New York, where she was executive director of the Arab-American Family Support Center.

Earlier this year state lawmakers learned children being screened after reports of abuse and neglect remained in unsafe situations after being deemed safe by department staff.

In March, Alhusseini unveiled a new training simulation for social workers. Last week, she announced an initiative to equip caseworkers with iPhones and tablets, in what was portrayed as an effort to increase productivity and home visits.

Saiki said that the agency would continue to emphasize child safety.

“Moving forward, our focus must be on the basics,” Saiki wrote, including correctly screening reports of abuse and neglect, ensuring safe placements and “ensuring ongoing oversight and

support in family foster care and residential placements.”

“In addition, we must continue our efforts toward the culture change needed to put children’s safety at the center of every decision and action,” Saiki said.

According to a spokesman for the department, Alhusseini’s annual salary of \$150,000 will not change with her new position.

The agency’s deputy director of child welfare, Laurie Price, has been appointed interim director of the division.

The governor set aside about \$1 billion for the child welfare division in her spending plan for the next two years. That figure may change as state legislators attempt to make cuts and raise taxes to fill an overall \$1.4 billion budget gap in the upcoming two-year budget cycle.

**WANTED**  
Alder and Maple Saw Logs & Standing Timber  
Northwest Hardwoods • Longview, WA  
Contact: John Anderson • 360-269-2500

**30 MINUTES on MEDICARE BASICS**  
What Baby Boomers need to know about Medicare!  
Presented by: **Teresa Brown**  
Teresa Brown Insurance and Lawry/de Freitas Wealth Management, LLC  
Seating is limited. Call today to reserve your spot  
**CALL: (503) 791-0997**

COMING JUNE 2017 OUR 10th ANNUAL

# COASTAL menu GUIDE



Copies distributed throughout the year to north coast hotels, motels, chambers of commerce, visitors bureaus, campgrounds, restaurants and stores and inserted in The Daily Astorian & Chinook Observer

**New this Year!**

Boost your visibility on nearly every page of our community news sites and reach more than 165,000 people a month online with our:

**Featured Ad Program**

**EXPAND YOUR PALATE ONLINE**

- Visit our Virtual Coastal Menu Guide online
- Turn through virtual pages
- Click on direct links to restaurant websites
- Access additional information
- coastweekend.com/menuguide

**Reserve your ad space in our 10th anniversary edition: Deadline: May 31**

Contact your advertising sales consultant for more information:  
**OREGON: 503-325-3211 • WASHINGTON: 800-643-3703**

## Lund - Belsche



David & Kimberly Lund of Astoria, Oregon are happy to announce the marriage of their son Dane Robert Lund to Demi Lea Belshe which took place on January 29, 2017. The parents of the bride are Wayne & Tracy Belshe of Ojai, California. The ceremony along with the reception was held at the Edgewood Gold Resort in South Lake Tahoe, Nevada.

Accompanying Demi on this special day was her oldest sister Brittney Yeskie as her Matron of Honor, and her twin sister Devan as her Maid of Honor. Her Bridesmaids consisted of sister-in-law Noelle Lund, cousin Corey Sanders and lifelong friends Natalie Dwight, Jenn Johnson and Kacie Melton.

Dane’s Best Man was his older brother Hans, along with groomsmen and close childhood friends Dylan Israel, Max Johnson, Marcus Brown, Taylor Landwehr, Ian Erickson and Peyton Gastelum.

Dane’s Grandparents are Ardelle & the late Robert Phillips. Demi has a large group of proud Grandparents Ray & Sandy Hoy living in Salcha, Alaska, Gary & Pinky Belshe living in Ojai, California and Dan & Margo Svikhart also living in Ojai, California.

The couple both graduated from Oregon State University and reside in Astoria. They have careers with Bogh Electric & Guild Mortgage.