

2026 Legislative Session Summary

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The 2026 legislative session began on Monday, February 2 and adjourned on Friday, March 6. The intervening thirty-two days were full of political intrigue, political theater, political highs and lows, and political positioning for the upcoming 2026 election cycle. The tone of the session was collegial for the most part but still made time for deep partisan divisions on guns, taxes, ODOT funding referral timing, and the federal tax disconnect bill.

Overall, legislative leadership kept the machine rolling forward and were able to stay away from a long rumored legislative walkout that would have caused a major chink in the armor. In the end, the session adjourned sine die two days earlier than required by the Oregon constitution and it seems that the partisan bickering that has been a major part of recent legislatures was evident but didn't reach the level of dissension that resulted in a walk out or other major stalling tactics.

ACEC Oregon's legislative committee met nearly every week during the session to review bills and to stay current with the latest from Salem. ACEC Oregon did not introduce any bills but we monitored several that rose to the level of interest and/or concern.

Transportation was a major issue of concern. The remnants of the transportation discussion from the 2025 regular session and the 2025 special session were front and center in the minds of all legislators and the outcome was decided on a party line vote. SB 1599 was a contentious response to the successful referral of the special session bill to raise taxes and fees to fund ODOT. The referral was supported by 250,000 registered voters and far surpassed the 78,000 valid signatures needed to force a vote by the public on the bill. SB 1599 was sponsored by legislative leaders and moved the election of the referral from the November general election to the May 19 primary election, 165 days sooner and hopefully far removed from voter's memories by the time the November general election arrived. Senate President Rob Wagner publicly acknowledged that the bill was a raw political move and was intended to keep the issue from sharing the same ballot as all the legislators who voted for the special session package. In the end, the bill passed moving the election to May 19 where it is expected to die which will further negatively impact the ODOT budget.

However, the demise of the 2025 special session bill will spur new and hopefully bi-partisan discussions and actions that may result in a 2027 session package of some significance. ACEC Oregon will be intimately involved no matter the outcome of the May

vote and whatever the process is to tee up the package for 2027. We need a fully functional transportation system, and the 2027 session will be the next opportunity to get a good package across the finish line.

The continuation of the overall transportation funding debacle continued through and beyond the end of session. SB 1599 passed to move the referral up 165 days from the November general election to the May 19 primary. While acknowledged as a purely political move to keep the issue away from the same ballot as legislators seeking re-election, the issue didn't go away upon passage.

Those opposed to moving the referral to May have filed a lawsuit to have a federal court overturn the measure and return it to the November ballot. This continues to play out but we should expect a court ruling relatively quickly as the timing for the administrative portion of the primary election is coming soon. However it turns out, the issue of transportation funding will continue deep into the 2027 session. ACEC Oregon is well positioned to be an active player in this process.

Budget and Project Bills:

ODOT Budget adjustment announced in [SB1601](#), sections 11-23 and [HB5204](#) sections 300 to 314. The ODOT budget was adjusted to raise another \$250 million to fund staff and maintenance and preservation activities. Funds were moved from projects in HB 2017, safe routes to schools, Connect Oregon bonds, and other areas. This is only a temporary fix for ODOT and the need for a significant funding package remains for the 2027 session to implement.

SB5701 - lists projects that were funded by general obligation bonds: [SB5701](#)

SB 5702 - is the capital construction bill: [SB5702](#)

General Policy Bills:

HB 4081 - Died. AGC sponsored work-zone safety using photo radar. Passed House Transportation 6-1 vote. Died in Ways and Means.

HB 4126 - Died. Rep. Gamba bill on per-mile road user charge. Died in Ways and Means.

SB 1501 - Trailblazer package to upgrade the Moda Center. Passed.

SB 1542 - Died. Directs the OTC to create a 10-year Capital investment plan. Specifies scoring methodology for various projects.

SB 1543 - Died. Modified the membership of the Oregon Transportation Commission.

SB 1507 - Disconnect from federal tax code passed and is expected to be signed by Governor Kotek. OBI is requesting a veto which will be highly unlikely. Representative Ed Diehl, a Republican candidate for Governor, has indicated the statewide network that collected the 250,000 signatures to refer the transportation package to voters will also refer key portions of this bill to voters.

Oregon Business and Industry Session Summary on general business bills:

[2026 Legislative Session in Review - Oregon Business & Industry](#)

Key political dates for 2026:

- May 19, Primary election statewide
- June 15, 16, 17, quarterly legislative days
- September 8, 9, 10, quarterly legislative days
- September 11, pre-session bill draft request deadline
- November 1, 2, 3, quarterly legislative days
- November 3, general election to feature Senator Merkley, Governor Kotek, 15 Senate and 60 House races, ballot measures TBD
- December 1, 2, 3, quarterly legislative days
- December 1, bills returned from legislative counsel deadline
- December 11, pre-session bill filing deadline to ensure ready on day 1 of session