



Bill Report: City Council

Report Date: February 20, 2026

City of Salem

Bill Number Position

[HB 4005 A](#) Support

Relating to Water Professionals Appreciation Week; prescribing an effective date.

Designates the first Saturday of October of each year through the end of the Sunday of the following weekend as Water Professionals Appreciation Week.

2/3/2026 - Water Professionals Appreciation Week is a designated time to recognize and thank the water and wastewater professionals who ensure communities have safe, reliable water and sanitation services. It highlights the essential, often behind-the-scenes work of operators, engineers, technicians, and support staff who protect public health and the environment. The week also helps raise public awareness about the value of water services and promotes careers in the water industry.

[HB 4036 A](#) Support

Relating to affordable housing; declaring an emergency.

Establishes the Housing Opportunity, Longevity and Durability Fund to deposit Article XI-Q bonds to be used by the Housing and Community Services Department to preserve affordable housing at risk of loss.

2/2/2026 - This legislation is the top housing priority for our statewide housing associations this session, including the Housing Authorities of Oregon, the Housing Alliance, and Housing Oregon. Given the limited availability of General Fund resources for additional housing investments, stakeholders have focused on expanding the allowable uses of general obligation bonds to support affordable housing preservation, in addition to new construction.

The Department of Justice recently issued a written opinion affirming that general obligation bonds may be used for this purpose, and the Legislature is expected to receive this guidance during the first week of session. This clarification is significant because, while General Fund capacity is constrained, the Legislature currently has more than \$500 million in bonding capacity. This bill leverages that capacity and aligns with the City's established priorities to expand and preserve affordable housing.

[HB 4085](#) Oppose unless
[INTRO](#) amended

Relating to autonomous vehicles.

Allows a person to operate an autonomous vehicle with the automated driving system engaged without a grant of driving privileges if certain conditions are met.

2/10/2026 - HB 4085 did not meet first session deadline.

2/3/2026 - This bill establishes regulations for self-driving vehicles at the state level, but preempts local laws and rules. The City opposes regulations that prohibit local control. Oppose unless amended to remove prohibitions on local government authority.

[HB 4094 A](#) Oppose

Relating to compensation for certain unused paid time off upon termination of employment; prescribing an effective date.

Requires employers that provide, by written policy or employment contract, for the payment of earned or accrued but unused paid time off upon termination to make such payments in accordance with statutory requirements governing final wages.

2/11/2026 - HB 4094 would result in a significant, unplanned financial expense to the City. As authored, HB 4094 would require public employers pay all unused vacation accruals for employees at time of separation. Our concern extends to health and well being of public sector employees who would be incentivized to take fewer vacation hours for the benefit at the end of their employment.

[HB 4161](#) Support
[INTRO](#)

Relating to use of official position or office; declaring an emergency.

Provides exceptions to the prohibited use by a public official of official position or office to obtain financial gain or avoid financial detriment that permit a public body to give public officials food, beverages and merchandise.

2/9/2026 - HB 4161 changes ORS 244.040 to add two additional categories of items a public official may receive without it constituting a ethics violation. HB 4161 would allow public officials to receive: 1) Food and/or beverage provided by a public body "during meetings or other official events held by the public body;" and, 2) Merchandise provided by the public body totaling less than \$100/year in value. HB 4161 is a statutory "fix" to a decision by the Oregon Government Ethics Commission that food and beverages provided by a public body is a financial gain to a public official and is subject to Oregon's ethics laws.

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HB 4161 will allow the City to provide food and beverage to employees, as well as token merchandise, retirement gifts, thank you presents and so forth without violating state ethics law or otherwise classifying the items as part of an official compensation package. The City should support the bill, as it will allow the City to do away with the cumbersome policy making food and beverage part of employees' official compensation packages. The bill will also allow for practices of employee appreciation – purchasing of treats, coffee, swag, donuts, etc. Things such as City purchased retirement gifts, birthday gifts, anniversary gifts and so forth would be allowed.

[HB 4177](#) Support
[INTRO](#)

Relating to public meetings; prescribing an effective date.

Restates the serial communications prohibitions for public meetings law purposes.

2/10/2026 - Under Oregon's Public Meetings Law, any deliberation involving a quorum of a public body must occur in a public meeting. Currently "deliberation" is defined as any discussion or communication that is "part of the decision making process." This definition is unclear and the Oregon Government Ethics Commission (OGEC) has taken a very expansive view of what is included in deliberations, including discussions such as routine information-gathering, identifying issues, and discussions that are not decision related. Additionally, OGEC has taken the view that public officials may violate Public Meetings Law with respect to meeting in private and serial communications regardless of the officials' intent. OGEC's interpretations have had a chilling effect on local government officials and the ability of public bodies to do their work.

HB 4177 would amend Oregon's Public Meetings Law to provide a clearer definition of what constitutes a deliberation, namely that the discussion or communication be one in which the members of a governing body "examine, weigh or reflect upon the reasons for or against a decision that is subject to the jurisdiction of the governing body." HB 4177 also makes it clear that Public Meetings Law does not apply to communications that are purely procedural; purely factual or educational; are made to the media, constituents, or members of the public; or are information gathering. HB 4177 also amends Public Meetings Law to prohibit a quorum from meeting in private or using serial communications for the purpose of deliberating or the purpose of circumventing meeting publicly. This would serve to give protections to public officials who engage in conversations not intending to violate the Public Meetings Law.

HB 4177 extends the period of time for filing a grievance from thirty to ninety days. Under HB 4177 the public body must still respond to the grievance within twenty-one days but is no longer required to admit or deny the facts and circumstances alleged and whether a public meetings law violation has occurred. Under HB 4177, a public body may cure a violation stated in a grievance by either rescinding the violation or acknowledging the violation in a public meeting and giving good cause for not rescinding the violation. Purely procedural errors may be cured by correcting procedures to ensure it won't happen again. HB 4177 prohibits OGEC from considering a complaint alleging a violation of the Public Meetings Laws if the complainant has not first filed a grievance.

HB 4177 requires that the OGEC proceed against the public body instead of a public official if it is determined that the complaint alleges an administrative error, which includes typos on an agenda, linked documents errors, and public meetings notice errors.

HB 4177 also amends Oregon's Public Meetings Law to update the manner in which public meetings may be held to include in person, or through electronic or telephonic means, or a combination thereof.

[SB 1567 A](#) Support

Relating to mixed income housing; prescribing an effective date.

Authorizes the Housing and Community Services Department to fund mixed income housing.

2/3/2026 - Jessica Blakely - SHA supports funding that allows more flexibility in the rent structure and varying income restrictions. This assists with financial feasibility as well as the ability to provide a space equally to a wide range of income levels. There is a severe shortage of moderate/middle income units within the City of Salem, and the community at large (Residents, developers, and operators) would benefit from this type of funding mechanism. It allows for a wider range of qualified applicants and equal opportunity to housing units within a development.



CITY COUNCIL

555 Liberty St SE / Room 220 • Salem, OR 97301-3513 • 503-588-6255 • Fax 503-588-6354

February 24, 2026

Senate President Rob Wagner
Speaker of the House Julie Fahey
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem OR 97301

Dear Senate President Wagner and Speaker Fahey:

I'm writing on behalf of the Salem City Council in support of a solution to the State of Oregon's transportation funding crisis. This problem impacts all local jurisdictions in Oregon, including Salem, who rely on funding support from the 50/30/20 split of gas tax revenues for maintenance projects. We ask to be part of the conversation as the outcome of these decisions is very important to us and to our community.

As you consider solutions, please understand the City of Salem fully supports efforts to diversify and increase transportation funding to support efficient and effective operations and maintenance of existing infrastructure.

We stand in support of swift action to stave off the State's transportation funding crisis because:

- Most road miles in Oregon are under local control. Maintaining the funding formula that shares State Highway Fund revenue is critical for infrastructure funding. This system ensures that taxpayers from all communities see and benefit from their local share of transportation funding.
- The primary funding source for road maintenance is the City of Salem's monthly allocation of State Highway Fund revenues.
- In the State Highway Fund, where gas taxes and car registration fees are collected to pay for road maintenance, revenue is not keeping pace with rising maintenance costs.
- Roadway conditions in Salem are deteriorating and available resources are not adequate to meet current needs.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY / AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

Women, minorities, and disabled are encouraged to apply • ADA Accommodations will be provided upon request

- In the next five years, by Fiscal Year 2029, Salem runs out of maintenance funding for our road system.
- This funding deficit will worsen without adding any resources to address demands for increased service levels based on population growth, safety, and other community expectations.

And, we ask that solutions are mindful of affordability challenges faced by households across Oregon. In Salem, affordability is one of the most prominent concerns our residents face. About 37% of households in Salem pay more than 30% of their income on housing. Over half of renter households in Salem experience cost burden (51%). Any outcome for transportation funding needs to take affordability into account.

Adoption of a transportation funding solution in 2027 should give the Legislature more time to create a meaningful, bipartisan, and transparent process that incorporates local government and community impacts, leading to a long-term package stabilizing and modernizing core transportation funding.

Sincerely,

City of Salem

CC:

Senator Kayse Jama, Senate Majority Leader

Senator Bruce Starr, Senate Republican Leader

Representative Ben Bowman, House Majority Leader

Representative Lucetta Elmer, House Republican Leader

Senator Kate Lieber, Ways & Means Co-Chair

Representative Tawna Sanchez, Ways & Means Co-Chair