

FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AGENDA

Date: April 5, 2025

Department: Government Affairs and
Policy Development

Meeting Date: April 17, 2025

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Presenter: Betsy Emery, Federal Affairs
Advisor

Length: 30 minutes

ISSUE STATEMENT

This work session is an opportunity to discuss Metro Council's federal legislative agenda for the 119th Congress (January 2025 - December 2026). The federal legislative agenda is comprised of two documents: one describing overarching values and another defining a narrow set of legislative priorities that the federal affairs program will focus on. The current federal political climate will also be discussed. This will be the first Council work session on this topic. Council is scheduled to consider adoption of their federal legislative agenda at the May 1st, 2025, meeting.

ACTION REQUESTED

The Council may wish to (1) discuss specific legislative values, principles and specific priorities in more detail; and/or (2) direct staff to develop or investigate additional legislative concepts before considering adoption of a federal legislative agenda during the May 1st, 2025, meeting.

IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES

Support Metro's policy goals through engagement with Members of Congress and federal agencies.

POLICY QUESTION(S)

- Does the Council wish to confirm or change any policy direction under which staff is currently operating with respect to issues that are likely to surface in the 119th Congress?
- Are there additional topics for which the Council would like to adopt legislative positions?
- Are there particular legislative positions or advocacy actions that the Council would like staff to prioritize during the 119th Congress?

POLICY OPTIONS FOR COUNCIL TO CONSIDER

See attached draft documents comprising the Federal Legislative Agenda for 119th Congress.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Provide feedback on the proposed federal legislative agenda in preparation for considering adoption during the May 1st, 2025, meeting.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Federal Election Outcomes

The 119th Congress (January 2025 – December 2026) is led by Republicans. Donald Trump was elected President and J.D. Vance is Vice President. Republicans won narrow majorities in both the House of Representatives and Senate during the November 2024 election. This is a large shift in leadership from the prior Congress in which Democrats controlled the Senate, Republicans controlled the House of Representatives, and a Democrat served in the White House.

In addition to the political shift in D.C. leadership, there have been large changes to the Congressional delegation representing the Portland metro region. After representing Oregon's third Congressional district for 29 years, Earl Blumenauer retired from the House of Representatives. Former State Representative Maxine Dexter was elected to fill his seat and represent the Portland and Mount Hood area. Additionally, former State Representative Janelle Bynum replaced Lori Chavez Deremer to represent Oregon's 5th Congressional District in D.C.

After losing her re-election bid, Lori Chavez Deremer has been confirmed by the Senate to serve on President Trump's cabinet as the Labor Secretary. She is the first Oregonian to hold a cabinet position since 1979 when former Portland Mayor Neil Goldschmidt served as President Carter's secretary of transportation.

White House and Republican Priorities

With their leadership trifecta, President Trump and the Republican Party are prioritizing a wide swath of policy efforts related to:

- Immigration: securing U.S. borders, deporting undocumented people, and suspending refugee resettlement
- Taxes: extending the 2017 tax package permanently and repealing clean energy tax credits
- Trade: imposing tariffs on imports from China, Mexico, Canada and other countries
- Energy / Climate: expanding oil and gas drilling, ending renewable energy leasing, eliminating energy efficiency requirements, and weakening environmental protections and permitting requirements
- Spending: establishing a new government office (the Department of Government Efficiency) to target "waste, fraud and abuse" in federal funding, eliminating federal agencies

Republicans will have to navigate very narrow margins to advance their legislative priorities. There are a few must-pass bills given upcoming expirations, including the 2017 tax bill provisions and the Farm Bill, both of which expire in September 2025.

They will also need to reauthorize a surface transportation bill before the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law expires in September 2026.

NEXT STEPS

Metro's legislative agenda setting process is iterative. Staff has met with Metro Councilors, departmental leadership, and jurisdictional partners to share respective initial priorities and learn what partners are pursuing. Staff also met with Metro's contract lobbyist, Summit Strategies, to discuss what is on the horizon in D.C. The draft documents before Council represent those conversations.

BACKGROUND

Council has adopted comprehensive federal legislative agendas to guide federal advocacy for each Congress since 2021. The draft version being considered during the April 17th Council meeting is an updated version of Council's agenda for the 118th Congress to reflect the Agency's current priorities amidst the new political climate.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Metro Council's Federal Legislative Values and Principles for the 119th Congress - Draft
2. Metro Council's Federal Legislative Priorities for the 119th Congress - Draft

[For work session:]

- Is legislation required for Council action? ☒ Yes ☐ No
- If yes, is draft legislation attached? ☐ Yes ☒ No