



**Written Testimony to the
House Transportation & Economic Development Committee
on HJR 9**

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Founded in 1968, the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership-based organization. We advance innovative, collaborative solutions to Oregon's environmental challenges for today and future generations.

OEC supports HJR 9, which proposes an amendment to the Oregon Constitution to allow revenue from taxes on motor vehicle fuel and ownership, operation or use of motor vehicles to be used for transportation projects that will prevent or reduce pollution and congestion created by use of motor vehicles.

Oregon's ability to fund least-cost, environmentally friendly, congestion-busting transportation projects is severely constrained by the fact that Oregon's Constitution restricts the use of all revenues from vehicle-related fees to fund road construction, maintenance and operation (with the exception of bikeways and walkways on the road right-of-way). This restriction makes sense on first blush, but actually hampers our ability to solve congestion problems. Congestion relief can often be achieved most cost-effectively through a package of solutions, including modest road improvements, increased transit service, better pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and even programs that help people drive less such as ridesharing (i.e., carpooling), bikesharing, carsharing, employee commute options, Safe Routes to School, social marketing like Drive Less Save More, and travel support technologies such as smart phone apps that connect travelers to convenient options.

The current constitutional restriction has the unintended effect of funding projects that may not be the best solution for the problem and may actually lead to increased, not decreased, congestion and pollution.

OEC served on the committee that developed the new tool "Mosaic: Value and Cost Informed Transportation Planning," a least-cost transportation planning tool requested by the 2009 Legislature in HB 2001. This tool can be used by communities around the state to compare the direct and indirect costs of demand and supply options to meet transportation goals and identify the most cost-effective mix of options. But communities that do desire to move forward with a least-cost package of options will continue to be hampered by the fact that there is little funding for non-road options.

We believe Oregon's Constitution should be amended to allow vehicle-related fees to be used more broadly for a variety of transportation projects that reduce congestion more effectively than new road capacity alone, and also have the positive effect of reducing transportation's environmental impact.

Thank you for your consideration.