

Why Broaden Oregon's Gas Tax Distribution?

Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates (*AORTA*), 2013

AORTA supports HJR 9, placing before voters the opportunity to change the Oregon Constitution to allow the use of revenue from taxes on motor vehicles and fuel to be used for intercity passenger rail, public transit, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities in addition to its use for roads.

This proposal could:

- Provide state matching funds for high-speed rail in Oregon
- Provide funds for bicycle and pedestrian facilities outside of road right-of-ways
- Provide funds for intercity bus service, especially in rural areas
- Provide alternative transportation options for those who cannot drive
- Reduce demand on the state lottery for funding *Connect Oregon IV*
- Reduce demand on the highway network
- Reduce traffic congestion
- Reduce oil consumption
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions

AORTA has long advocated this constitutional amendment. In 1994, an *AORTA* affiliate, Oregonians for Effective Transportation (OFCET), mounted a campaign to bring this issue to the ballot. Attached are two documents which were generated in support of that effort. Many of the arguments presented in 1994 are even more compelling in 2013.

WE NEED YOUR HELP . . .

. . . to put a constitutional amendment on the November 1994 ballot that would remove the bias that favors highways over transit, rail and bicycle projects.

State revenues from motor vehicle taxes and fees can only be used for highways, even though other forms of transportation reduce traffic congestion, are safer, cleaner, more energy efficient, more supportive of desired land use and use fewer tax dollars.

This is a **big** job. Over a hundred thousand signatures must be collected throughout Oregon by July 1994 to place this on the November general election ballot.

AMENDS CONSTITUTION: VEHICLE, FUEL TAXES USABLE TO REDUCE TRAFFIC, POLLUTION

QUESTION: *Shall Constitution permit using motor vehicle and fuel taxes for surface transportation projects that reduce motor vehicle pollution or traffic?*

SUMMARY: *This measure would amend the Oregon Constitution. Under current constitutional provisions, proceeds from taxes on motor vehicle fuel and taxes and fees on motor vehicles may be used only for "construction, reconstruction improvement, repair, maintenance, operation and use" of public highways and rest areas. The measure would allow those funds also to be used for "surface transportation projects," such as certain bus, rail, bicycle and pedestrian projects, "which reduce the traffic burden or pollution from motor vehicles on public roads."*

Petitions will be ready in early August.

PLEASE fill out a volunteer card so we may contact you when the petitions are available. Take several cards for friends and others who may be interested in volunteering. They may mail it to:

Oregonians for Cost Effective Transportation (OFCET)
317 SE 62nd Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97215

Rational and cost-effective transportation development is impossible as long as the lion's share of our transportation taxes are locked up for highway use only. If Oregon is going to avoid California and Washington-style gridlock, we need the funding flexibility this amendment will provide. ***For more information call: 284-7182.***

Cover Sheet for Statewide Initiative Petition in the State of Oregon
AMENDS CONSTITUTION: VEHICLE, FUEL TAXES USABLE TO REDUCE TRAFFIC, POLLUTION

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SUMMARY: This measure would amend the Oregon Constitution. Under current constitutional provisions, proceeds from taxes on motor vehicle fuel and taxes and fees on motor vehicles may be used only for "construction, reconstruction, improvement, repair, maintenance, operation and use" of public highways and rest areas. The measure would allow those funds also to be used for "surface transportation projects," such as certain bus, rail, bicycle and pedestrian projects, "which reduce the traffic burden or pollution from motor vehicles on public roads."

WHEREAS, the legislature and the people of Oregon are committed to the efficient use of all tax resources; and

WHEREAS, air pollution caused by motor vehicle emissions can be reduced by the use of other means of transportation; and

WHEREAS, industrial development will be curtailed by the federal government if clean air standards are not met in Oregon metropolitan areas; and

WHEREAS, throughout this state, public transit and other modes can often provide more cost-effective means of moving people and goods than conventional road expansion; and

WHEREAS, Oregon cannot capture its full share of federal gas tax funds for the full range of transportation alternatives because Oregon lacks flexibility in allocating state and local matching revenues;

NOW, THEREFORE,

Be It Resolved by the People of the State of Oregon:

PARAGRAPH 1. Section 3a, Article IX of the Constitution of the State of Oregon is amended to read:

Sec. 3a. (1) Except as provided in subsection (2) of this section, revenue from the following shall be used exclusively for the construction, reconstruction, improvement, repair, maintenance, operation and use of public highways, roads, streets, and roadside rest areas in this state, **and for surface transportation projects in this state which reduce the traffic burden or pollution from motor vehicles on public roads:**

(a) Any tax levied on, with respect to, or measured by the storage, withdrawal, use, sale, distribution, importation or receipt of motor vehicle fuel or other products used for the propulsion of motor vehicles; and

(b) Any tax or excise levied on the ownership, operation or use of motor vehicles.

(2) Revenues described in subsection (1) of this section:

(a) May also be used for the cost of administration and any refunds or credits authorized by law.

(b) May also be used for the retirement of bonds for which such revenues have been pledged.

(c) If from levies under paragraph (b) of subsection (1) of this section on campers, mobile homes, motor homes, travel trailers, snowmobiles or like vehicles, may also be used for the acquisition, development maintenance or care of parks or recreation areas.

(d) If from levies under paragraph (b) of subsection (1) of this section on vehicles used or held out for use for commercial purposes, may also be used for enforcement of commercial vehicle weight, size, load, conformation and equipment regulation.

PARAGRAPH 2. The amendment proposed by this resolution shall be submitted to the people for their approval or rejection at the next regular general election held throughout this state.

Instructions for Petition Signers:

1. Only registered voters of the state of Oregon may sign a petition.
2. Sign your full name, as you did when you registered to vote, and fill in the date on which you signed the petition, your residence address and your precinct in the spaces provided.
3. A woman should sign her own name, not her husband's or her husband's initials (for example: not "Mrs. John A. Jones" or "Mrs. J. A. Jones").
4. Be sure to print your name clearly in the space provided.
5. It is unlawful to sign any person's name other than your own. Do not sign another person's name under any circumstances.
6. It is advisable to use a pen or indelible pencil for signing petitions.
7. Do not use ditto marks.
8. It is unlawful to sign a petition more than once.
9. It is unlawful for a person to knowingly sign a petition when the person is not qualified to sign it.

Instructions for Petition Circulators:

1. Only registered voters of the state of Oregon may sign a petition.
2. All signers on any one signature sheet must be registered voters in the same county.
3. It is advisable to use a pen or indelible pencil for signing petitions.
4. Do not use ditto marks.
5. A petition circulator must be a registered voter of the state.
6. Only one circulator may collect signatures on any one sheet of a petition.
7. It is unlawful for a petition circulator to knowingly make any false statement to any person who signs it or requests information about it.
8. It is unlawful to circulate or file a petition knowing it to contain a false signature.

Chief Petitioners: James M. Howell, 3325 NE 45th Ave., Portland, OR 97213

John L. Frewing, 7932 SE Reed College Place, Portland, OR 97202

Fred D. Nussbaum, 2614 NE 43rd Ave., Portland, OR 97213

FOR INFORMATION CALL: (503) 284-7182

PLEASE RETURN PETITIONS TO:

Oregonians for Cost Effective Transportation
3325 NE 45th Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97213

PETITION FOR STATEWIDE INITIATIVE MEASURE: SIGNATURE SHEET

PETITION I.D. #ZZZ

This is a statewide petition. Signers of this page must be registered voters in _____ county only.

TO THE SECRETARY OF THE STATE OF OREGON: We, the undersigned voters, request the attached measure be submitted to the people of Oregon for their approval or rejection at the election to be held on November 8, 1994. We have not previously signed a petition sheet for this measure.

AMENDS CONSTITUTION: VEHICLE, FUEL TAXES USABLE TO REDUCE TRAFFIC, POLLUTION

Table with 6 columns: SIGNATURE, Date Signed Mo/Day/Yr, PRINT NAME, RESIDENCE ADDRESS STREET AND NUMBER, City or Post Office, Zip Code, and Precinct (if known). Rows numbered 1 to 20.

CIRCULATOR'S VERIFICATION STATEWIDE INITIATIVE MEASURE PETITION

I, (print circulator's name), hereby verify every person who signed this sheet did so in my presence and I believe each person is a qualified voter in the State of Oregon (ORS 250.045).

SIGNATURE OF CIRCULATOR

CIRCULATOR'S ADDRESS (Street, City and Zip Code)