

Senator Chris Edwards, Chair, Special Committee for HB2281
Committee Members: Senators Girod, Johnson, Kruse, Steiner-Hayward and Whitsett

RE: HB2281 and Amendment B7 6.24.2015
From: Tom Bowerman, PolicyInteractive Research

I apologize that I'm unable to meet your short notice requirements to be with you in person to address this bill. Herein I will briefly summarize problems with HB2281 with Amendment B7.

1. Process: The development of this bill, specifically Amendment B7, has occurred in closed doors, obscure from transparent evaluative observation. Furthermore, the proposed repeal of an existing law which did go through a deliberative process and transparency, being substituted with HB2281+B7, an opaque bill, is fully unacceptable in an open democracy. Passage of this bill would mark a low point in Oregon legislative process, already in short supply in the eyes of Oregon citizens. Less than 24 hour notice of a public hearing is similarly objectionable.
2. Illegitimate claims: The elements being proposed by Amendment B7 claims to outperform the law which HB2281 aims to replace -- such a claim is impossible to carefully evaluate in the short window given for public review. Nevertheless, based on strong contemporary research, some aspects of the claim are highly questionable on their face. To use but one example, the last three years of scientific research has seriously called to question natural gas as a "lower carbon intensity" substitution for liquid fuels. By comparison, Quebec and California are headed toward electric school bus conversions, based on their deeper research. This strongly suggests that Oregon has not done it's homework on this proposal.
3. Fiscal: The price tags for the measures leave open the question of where these revenues are going to be secured. It is suspect, given the history of partisanship over revenue to cover these costs, that these proposals are unfunded mandates, given the known disposition to play shell games with funding promises.
4. Displacement of superior legislation: A serious objection about the way this bill has progressed is the back-room negotiations effectively derailed due process of other much better legislative proposals. By way of comparison, HB3470, frozen out of deliberation due to the B7 type negotiations, provides a path for stronger funding without hitting the lower income and middle class sectors. It is very troubling that this Legislature has submerged the best bill to control run-away greenhouse gas emissions (HB3470-1) for a four cent a gallon gasoline tax increase. HB2281 with B7 is an endorsement that our grandchildren's future is unimportant to the 2015 legislative bodies.

If HB3470 is not going to be passed this session, then I urge you to take a principled stand against willful avoidance and denial of the urgency of climate change with plans to return for a special session or short session with a serious commitment to tackle these issues in proper transparent and deliberative manner.

The method and purpose of HB2281 and B7 Amendment are both flawed and unacceptable.

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