

Dear Senator Gorsek, Representative McLain and members of the Oregon Joint Committee on Transportation:

Unfortunately, I was unable to attend the listening session that your committee held in my hometown of Medford on Thursday, so I am offering my written comments below for the committee's consideration:

I'm sure that your committee has received many long laundry lists of highway, rail, public transit and other projects that Oregonians would like to see constructed. My own list will follow, but first I want to address funding. Unless the Legislature finds and secures sources of funding that are stable and sufficient, providing a much greater amount of money than our current fuel taxes generate, we will struggle as a state even to maintain our current transportation system, much less add to it.

Alan Journet, writing in his comments to you on behalf of Southern Oregon Climate Action Now, listed these possible sources of revenue for transportation: Flat Rate Fees, Indexing Fuel Taxes to Inflation: "Funding Toll Roads; Imposing

a Mileage-based User tax.” He goes on to propose his preferred solution:

1- Eliminate the proportion of the gasoline tax that is assigned to funding transportation thereby reducing that tax,

2- Impose a Mileage-based User Tax assessed on miles travelled in the state. We suggest that vehicle owners may be allowed either to maintain written records of their miles traveled in-state and out-of-state or purchase and install (as tax-deductible items) equipment to record this.

3- The fee should be inversely proportional to the miles per gallon equivalent as designated federally (e.g., Lozanova undated) for the make and model.

4- Acknowledging that it might be appropriate to establish a fee scale separately for personal passenger vehicles and commercial vehicles we suggest this might be considered.

As a member of SOCAN, I agree with Professor Journet’s proposal with some caveats:

1. Toll roads should be considered in the Portland/Salem metropolitan area and perhaps in Eugene/Springfield as well. I was in Texas

recently and experienced toll roads without toll booths, enforced by cameras and computers. That seems like a fair way to allow folks with resources to pay for the privilege of driving on less crowded roads, thus reducing the traffic on existing highways. But this would require the construction of new toll lanes – not turning existing lanes into toll lanes.

2. The mileage-based user tax should be enforced by requiring all vehicle owners to have mileage counters installed in their vehicles. I wouldn't rely on vehicle owners to keep accurate records of mileage without counters.

3. Look for other innovative ways to raise revenue for transportation that other states may have discovered.

As for my list of projects, I just would urge this committee to prioritize mass transit, bicycle lanes with speed limits for electric bikes, and sidewalks. I would love to see a medium to high speed rail project running from Portland to Salem to Eugene to Roseburg to Medford. Think how many cars that would take off of Interstate- 5.

Thank you very much for seeking comments from citizens throughout the state of Oregon.

Best regards

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