

Since I am unable to attend any of your scheduled statewide hearings, I am submitting this written testimony on alternative funding options for road maintenance to the Joint Transportation Committee. I definitely favor raising more funds to maintain our roads. Thank you for considering the suggestions below. At some point, if time permits, it would be interesting to learn why or why not these suggestions were adopted or rejected.

My initial response to funding options being considered by your Committee is that basically, all ideas about increasing funds for State or Interstate highway and County road maintenance, boil down to **asking Oregonians to pay more**. **“Why are not visitors to Oregon asked to contribute to the substantial use they make of our state’s highways and byways to vacation, seek employment, attend college or visit relatives?”**

I favor putting 24 hr. tolling stations on 28 of the highways crossing state boundaries between Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and California. (See attached list). Tolls should be at least \$2.00/vehicle (maybe more) and should be levied when entering or leaving Oregon. Both I-5 and I-205 bridges in Portland should be exempt from tolling initially given the already congested traffic at these two interstate crossings. I also favor installing tolls on the Dundee bypass. When the latter was originally conceived, all of us thought that tolls would be levied to pay for it. **My suggestion would be NOT to toll cars, motor homes, trucks, or any mode of transportation carrying an Oregon license plate. Bicycles, Tri-cycles etc. would also be subject to the tolls if they could not provide proof that the owner lived in Oregon.** Tolls should be added to both I-5 and I-205 as part of the reconstruction of these interstate crossings. Tolls on the Astoria Megler Bridge were extremely successful. The suggested tolls should be collected by a local individuals, employed by the State. This would provide employment in many rural communities where the interstate highways occur. If applied only to vehicles or residents who are NOT Oregon residents, the tax would allow visitors to pay for the roads they share with tax paying residents. **Tolls on non-residents** would not unduly penalize Oregonians who commute to neighboring states for employment, to vacation, or to visit relatives.

Tolling out-of-state vehicles as they enter or leave Oregon would help maintain the roads they use while visiting here. For Oregon taxpayers, it is particularly irksome to be trapped on two lane coastal highways behind a string of behemoth out-of-state motor homes or to share highways like I-5 with the numerous huge vans transporting goods interstate. Oregonians are already taxed to provide our visitors with scenic highways, clean restrooms, lovely parks etc., water treatment facilities in areas where tourism disproportionately impacts rural communities etc. Those visiting us should contribute to maintaining the roads which make their travel within the State possible.

If a sales tax is proposed, I think that **Oregon residents should be exempted from it!** Most of our visitors pay sales taxes where they live. Paying it here too should not be a huge problem for them. An Oregon Driver's License could be provided at check-out to obtain a waiver of the

sales tax. Businesses should receive some rebate of sales taxes collected to compensate for the extra staff required to process these levies.

If an increased gas tax is considered, it should not exceed rates charged in neighboring states – Washington Idaho and California. Gas tax increases could be tied to inflation but not to exceed 15% increase in every ten year period commencing with the base year of 2025. In this scenario, gas taxes could be increased by 15% between 2025 and 2035; starting with a base year in 2035, they could be increased another 15% by 2045; and so on through the years. Electric vehicles (cars, trucks, school buses, Farm Equipment) should be subjected to an assessment equal to the average gas tax collected on similarly sized vehicles.

If an increase in license renewal or initial registration fees is required (and it probably should be to **improve services in DMV offices**), there needs to be a mechanism exempting people from the increase if they are members of the Oregon Health Plan. The idea here is to find some mechanism to assure that low-income people are not discouraged from registering vehicles. Some other low-income measurement could be substituted. I would favor a **substantial increase in licensing fees for luxury vehicles** – by at least \$200/year. If you are driving a Cadillac, a Porsche, a Mercedes Benz, a BMW, an Audi, an expensive sports car and select additional vehicles costing more than \$60,000.00, you can afford the license fee increase. RV licensure costs should also be increased as a function of the cost of the vehicle. **Eliminate the tax right-offs and reduced licensing fees for vehicles owned by, registered to, and licensed by an OREGON LLC ownership entity. Somehow capture the resulting increased revenue for highway maintenance.**

A mileage travelled assessment mechanism should be required for every vehicle travelling on Oregon Roads including TRI-MET buses and light rail in the Metropolitan area. This would include in-state licensed and out-of-state licensed vehicles.

**Sunset Provisions** If any of the above taxes on Oregonians are imposed to quickly produce funds for highway maintenance, they should be stopped when roads proposed for tolling are producing revenue.

**State contributions to County road maintenance should be increased.**

I wish you and other legislators well with efforts to raise funds for road maintenance throughout Oregon. I hope you will assure that these suggestions are at least considered when final decisions on funding are made. Thanks for listening.

Syd Hatch

## List of Interstate Highways Proposed for Tolling

Astoria-Megler Bridge on Interstate 101

Longview-Rainier Bridge (the Lewis & Clark Bridge)

I-5 & I-205 Portland-Vancouver when planned reconstruction has been completed

Bridge of the Gods at Cascade Locks

Hood River Bridge

I-97 at the Dalles

Hwy 97 Biggs Junction

Hwy 395 Umatilla

Hwy 730

Hwy 11 (to Walla Walla)

Hwy 129/Oregon 3 near Flora, Oregon

Hwy 71 Richland/Cambridge Idaho

Hwy 52 to Payette, Idaho

Hwy 84 Ontario/Idaho

Hwy 20 at Nyssa

Hwy 19 to Homesdale, Idaho

Hwy 95 Jordan Valley

Crossing at Fort McDermott between Oregon & California

Hwy 205 at Denio

Hwy 140 Lakeview/ California

Hwy 34 near Lakeview

Hwy 395 near Lakeview

Hwy 139 near Merrill

Hwy 97 Klamath Falls/California

I-5 at Mt. Ashland/California

Hwy 199 Cave Junction/California

Hwy 101 Brookings/California

