

Joint Committee on Transportation

September 26, 2024 Testimony

Testimony by Gary Newbore, Charbonneau

Good evening, Co-Chairs Gorsek and McLain, Members of the Joint Committee on Transportation:

My name is Gary Newbore and I'm a resident of the Charbonneau community and the previous President of the Board of Directors prior to Anne Shevlin.

My comments this evening are mostly focused on finding diversified funding methods for ODOT. In terms of funding sources, such sources need to be fair, efficient in their revenue to cost of collection ratio, and collect fees from all road users, ideally as an amount of use and physical impact on the roads and bridges themselves.

Since inflation will likely not end in my lifetime, such funding sources should be tied to a COLA to stay current with inflationary cost increases. Utilization of those systems, which are already in place for such revenue streams as gas taxes and vehicle registration fees, are probably most cost effective.

My suggestions include:

- Substantially increase the gas tax and index it to inflation.

- Substantially adjust Vehicle Registration Fees and include all kinds of street vehicles including bicycles. Consider a vehicle Registration Fee based on gross Vehicle weight. As an example, a Chevy Suburban would pay more than a Honda Civic as the Suburban has a bigger impact on the roads. Again, add a COLA provision to these fees.
- Add a Registration Fee Surcharge on non PUC trucks over 6000 lbs. Gross Vehicle Weight receiving IRS Section 179 deductions.
- Adjust the PUC Weight Mile Fees to 100% of the national average.
- Toll ALL bridges across the Columbia River with the collected funds used exclusively for maintaining and replacing all state bridges.
- Drop other tolling options until multimodal options such as tolling only lanes are widely available.
- Enhance enforcement of expired Vehicle Registration tags. This information should already be available in ODOT's computer system.
- Research revenue generation systems for the other 49 states to see if there is an additional revenue generation system that works. To wrap this up I have to say that the previous tolling options did not meet the fairness sniff test. Essentially one county was paying for the entire state!

- Returning to the standard of fairness, should tolling on the Boone Bridge become a reality, the people of Charbonneau once again ask you for a tolling exemption for our residents as we are truly unique geographically in the state and the Boone Bridge is our only way into our city of Wilsonville for our daily needed services such as groceries, gas, medical, etc.
- Lastly, Just as coins have two sides; so do organizations: Revenue and Expense. I urge you to hire an efficiency expert to examine ODOT's organizational structure and look for ways to streamline their organization and reduce costs.

Thank you for your time!

Gary Newbore - Charbonneau
Wilsonville, Oregon