

September 27, 2024

Joint Committee On Transportation:

I would like to provide my input regarding items that appear to be on ODOT's list of tax/fee increases for the 2025 budget.

1. Tolls - Tolls should be totally off the board. Tolls provide no benefit to the taxpayer and the implementation of them just becomes another 'Department' of ODOT hiring lifetime employee's to figure out how to spend our tax dollars to gather yet more tax dollars for ODOT. The net impact of tolls on Oregon's citizens is negative no matter how you word it. I won't go into the list of the negative items that tolls do to us as I know that you have heard them all. The citizens have spoken loudly about tolls and it is clear they are not supported in any way or format. IP-31 will make it to the voters and they will vote with a responding NO to tolls.

2. Registration Fee's - Enough already. The registration fee should only be figured at the rate that it costs to provide its specific service. No money should be made on this, it should cover registration only.

3. Gas Taxes - No more increases. I am in favor of mileage based pricing as long as you simply accept yearly declarations of miles driven by drivers. No 'magic' electronic equipment, just plain old mileage reporting. The insurance companies have used this method for decades with efficiency and accuracy. ODOT can do the same. Fee's should be based on weight and miles only. Get rid of all the complex rules surrounding vehicle classification and taxing. ODOT pushes for EV's but wants to double gas taxes, NO. All vehicles have the same impact on our roads and should pay accordingly.

In general ODOT has poorly planned the road maintenance and highway growth for decades. No penalties are ever placed on those in leadership positions of ODOT. The 100's of millions on failed efforts like the new I-5 bridge is just one example. The list goes on.

I understand the need to take care of Oregon roads. I have been driving for 60+ years and we used to have pristine, safe, traffic load capable roads. We now have a series of potholes spanning miles of poorly maintained and planned roads. ODOT needs to be held accountable for quality and for staying in budget. The 'nice to have' items need to be removed and the focus on roadways should be for cars and trucks, and this needs to be priority one.

Thank You,

Bill Mason
Clackamas County

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