

Submitter: Megan Draper
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Interim Committee On Transportation
Funding
Measure, Appointment or LC 2
Topic:

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Megan Draper, and I'm here representing Oregonians who want safe roads, reliable transit, and a budget that respects families already stretched thin. I urge you to reject proposals to raise the gas tax, increase income taxes, and hike vehicle registration and title fees.

My objections are grounded in three realities:

Oregon households are still wrestling with an elevated cost of living.

Stacking new transportation taxes and fees will fall hardest on those with the least—pushing marginalized Oregonians further to the margins and worsening instability.

The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) has not earned a bigger check after repeated fiscal mismanagement.

1. Cost of Living

Every dollar at the pump or DMV is a dollar not spent on rent, groceries, or care.

Inflation may have cooled, but prices remain high, and families are still paying today's inflated baseline for food, housing, and insurance.

The proposed hikes are not minor. Moving the gas tax from 40¢ to 46¢ per gallon, raising registration by about \$42, and title fees by \$139 quickly add up—especially for working families who drive daily. For tradespeople, home-health workers, childcare providers, and commuting parents, driving isn't optional—it's essential.

These costs also fall unevenly. Rural residents often drive longer distances for groceries, healthcare, and work. Urban residents priced out of city centers face unavoidable commute miles. A per-mile cost increase is inherently regressive, taking a larger share from lower- and middle-income households than the wealthy.

2. Disproportionate Harm

When transportation costs rise, those already on the edge are hit first: low-income workers, fixed-income seniors, single parents, and Oregonians re-entering the workforce. For them, transportation isn't a convenience—it's a lifeline.

If someone can't afford new title or registration fees, they may risk driving without proper documentation. That leads to citations, fines, and possible impound fees.

Without a car, they lose their job. Without a job, they risk losing housing. These are the domino effects that push people from "barely making it" to "not making it."

This cycle doesn't just harm individuals—it worsens Oregon's homelessness crisis and puts additional strain on already stretched social services. Meanwhile, law

enforcement is often unequipped to enforce these requirements consistently, leaving the burden to fall on the very people least able to bear it.

3. ODOT Accountability

Finally, ODOT has not earned more taxpayer dollars. Before asking households for higher taxes and fees, the state must address the department's severe management failures. The recent billion-dollar budget error is not an isolated slip—it's the most glaring example of long-standing inefficiencies and unaccounted-for millions.

If a household lost money at this scale, it would be forced to change habits, tighten spending, and fix errors before asking neighbors for help. ODOT should be held to the same standard. Without demonstrating real accountability and reform, simply writing a bigger check rewards mismanagement and further erodes public trust.

Raising the gas tax, income taxes, and DMV fees will not solve Oregon's transportation challenges—it will deepen financial strain on families, push vulnerable people closer to instability, and funnel more money into an agency that has yet to prove fiscal responsibility.

Instead of balancing the state's transportation budget on the backs of those least able to carry it, I urge this committee to prioritize accountability, efficiency, and solutions that truly serve all Oregonians.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and service to our beautiful state.