

Submitter: Kristina Ernstrom  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Joint Interim Committee On Transportation  
Funding  
Measure, Appointment or LC 2  
Topic:  
Governor Kotek,

I am writing to express deep concern about the impact of increasing taxes on Oregon's low- and middle-income families. These rising burdens are not only straining working households but are also driving people and businesses away from our state, creating a cycle that threatens Oregon's long-term economic health.

Today, the average Oregonian must earn well over \$100,000 a year to afford the rising cost of living. Yet the median income in Oregon is roughly half that—around \$50,000. This massive gap makes additional taxation devastating for families who are already stretching every dollar to cover housing, transportation, food, and healthcare. Instead of lifting people up, these policies risk pushing more working families into financial hardship and discouraging young families from building a future here.

We are already seeing the consequences: many residents are leaving Oregon for more affordable states, and large companies hesitate to invest here due to high operating costs and tax burdens. The combination of outmigration and lost business growth reduces Oregon's competitiveness and weakens our tax base further—ironically undermining the very revenue increases these tax hikes aim to achieve.

Meanwhile, agencies such as ODOT continue to employ administrators and leadership making salaries far above the median household income. It is difficult for everyday Oregonians to accept that we are being asked to give more while government spending at the top remains unchecked.

Governor, Oregon thrives when families can afford to stay and businesses feel confident investing in our communities. Please consider that continually raising taxes on those already struggling is not a sustainable solution. We need policies that prioritize affordability, accountability in government spending, and an environment where working families and job creators alike can prosper.

Respectfully,  
Kristina Ernstrom