

Submitter: Amy Vogt

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Interim Committee On Transportation
Funding

Measure, Appointment or
Topic: LC 2

There is no revenue or money problem

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There are spending, priority and accountability problems.

We are told that Oregon is the "lowest of the seven Western states in what we spend on roads and bridges" but it's not true! And the "only" solution is to bail out ODOT by taking more of our money. That's it, that's all the entire solution that Governor and her minions have.

"ODOT, which had a \$6.9 billion budget for biennial 2023–25, says it faces a “funding crisis” because it isn’t allowed to shift allocated funds from projects to maintenance and needed repairs and because fuel tax revenues and fees have failed to keep pace with inflation."

Okay... then allow them. You are lawmakers. Why don't you change the laws, but don't give blanket power to the Governor.

Do I think projects are important? Yes. Do I think cost overruns (like Abernethy Bridge) to the tune of \$600 million is a problem? This is a huge yes, where is the accountability? As a citizen I am not allowed "cost overruns" in any faucet of my life. Why should the government be allowed to do so in anyway shape or form? They shouldn't, but they do, over and over again.

Do I think that operations/preservation/maintenance needs to be prioritized, and it isn't currently? 100% yes.

But don't just change priorities and funding from "projects" to preservation/maintenance/operation, how about you change priorities from transit, from bike/ped, from EV rebates, from climate and DEI. The newest proposition from the Governor includes doubling the transit (payroll) tax!! When transit ridership is lower than pre-2017 numbers? Why? It's one of the most inequitable and unfair taxes in existence. All of Oregon pays for transit services that only few people use. This does not make good financial sense at all, and yet we are still forced to support this with our money.

Think of it this way: \$6.9 BILLION budget, and the choice is to cut 400+ ODOT jobs because there is a couple hundred-million-dollar shortfall, this is truly insanity!!! If

plowing roads and preserving our system is the most important thing to Oregonians when it comes to "transportation", then maybe that should be the priority of the agency that claims to serve them.

From what we understand of the upcoming bill puts the price tag at \$5.631 BILLION over the next 10 years (including a 6-cent immediate gas tax increase), which is larger than the HB2017 transportation package (\$5.3B) that was worked and negotiated for 2 years and had a 10-cent gas tax slowly introduced over 10 years. This package is no band aid.

Bottom line - anyone that votes for the upcoming tax bill allows the status quo of an agency that really does need to change their priorities. The whole entire system needs a major overhaul not band aids, do better legislatures do much, much better!!!