

Dear Transportation Funding Committee Members,

I am a resident of southern Oregon and a retired senior struggling to make ends meet with a very small monthly Social Security income.

I am writing to voice my concerns regarding your proposed tax increases, which include a 6-cent hike in the state gas tax, increases in vehicle registration fees, and the expansion of the payroll tax. These proposals are deeply concerning, especially as many Oregonians, myself included, are already struggling with rising living costs. The increase in the gas tax alone will directly impact *everyone*, raising the cost of goods and services for citizens as well as businesses.

I ask you to please consider the House Republicans' alternative plan to fund ODOT by refocusing existing revenue instead of adding billions of dollars in new taxes on struggling Oregonians. You can make the decision to use existing revenue from the emergency board. The agency's jobs will still be protected, as they should be, but without raising taxes.

Furthermore, it is troubling to see the Oregon Department of Transportation being given more funding without a clear commitment to efficiency and accountability. *The Department has already identified areas where they are engaged in work that is not core to their mission, and they have pointed out potential cost savings through reducing spending and addressing vacancies.* I am not alone in my belief that ODOT needs a thorough audit to ensure taxpayer money is being spent effectively, rather than being allocated Carte Blanche.

I strongly urge you to reconsider these tax hikes, to look into the alternative plan of using existing revenue from the emergency board and then focus on reducing unnecessary spending within state agencies like the Oregon Department of Transportation. Rather than imposing new burdens on Oregonians, we should prioritize responsible fiscal management and policies that encourage economic growth, and not further financial hardship for Oregon's citizens and her businesses. You were elected to stand up for your fellow Oregonians. Please don't let us down.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Martel