

I am writing in reference to the new proposed taxes being proposed to prevent layoffs for ODOT.

I am a senior on a fixed income. Before retiring, my husband was laid off. We had to figure out how to cut our budget so we would not lose our home. Then my husband passed away and his income was totally gone. I had to figure out how to live on half of what we had been earning. I cut everywhere I could just so I could keep my house and try to keep the lifestyle that I had. I was able to figure things out and in the end, I ended up keeping those cuts in place.

Now, even though I have kept those cuts in place, we have seen electricity go up 49%. We have seen Natural Gas go up in price. We have seen groceries go up significantly in the past few years. We have seen gas prices go up. We have seen an increase in our annual property taxes. We have seen the CAT tax included in what we buy at some establishments. We have seen our taxes go up tremendously so that the cuts I had to make to ensure I could stay in my house, need to be cut again just so I can keep at the same level of lifestyle. There is only so much cutting a person can do before necessities start being cut; necessities like food, water, shelter, medication, gasoline, electricity, natural gas and the basic essentials needed to live.

If these taxes are imposed, something more will have to be cut from my already shrinking budget. I don't know where I can cut anymore and still be sustainable. Doubling my car registration may only happen once a year, but that month do I cut out food, medication needed, gas to run my car, electricity or natural gas? What necessity do I have to cut just so that one ODOT employee can stay employed.

What about our education system? Are you concerned about keeping the teachers employed? Many teachers were laid off this past June due to lack of budget. I don't see anything being done about that. You are not giving the school districts more money to fund the schools? No, you are making them work within their means. ODOT needs to do the same thing. ODOT needs to look at the budget, figure out what projects and maintenance is important. Change the law so that maintenance gets more than 6% of the funds from gas taxes and be accountable.

We do not need higher taxes, we need more accountability. We need essential things done, not pet projects. There are options here rather than just raising all these fees and taxes. Those things need to be looked at and cut before any more taxes are imposed on the Oregon citizens. We can no longer add more taxes to our plate - we are taxed out!!

To add insult to injury, putting in this proposed tax bill that ODOT can increase the gas taxes on odd years if the legislature does not do it, is sneaky and deceptive. We need accountability. We are not deep pockets to keep throwing money down the drain. Do what is right for the Oregon people and be responsible.