

Submitter: Stephen Popa

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Interim Committee On Transportation  
Funding

Measure, Appointment or  
Topic: LC 2

Dear Members of the Joint Interim Committee on Transportation Funding, My name is Stephen Popa, and I am a resident of Aloha, Oregon. I am writing to strongly oppose the proposed transportation funding bill as outlined by Governor Tina Kotek. While I recognize the importance of maintaining our state's infrastructure, this bill represents an excessive and poorly conceived tax increase that burdens working Oregonians at a time when many are already struggling with high costs of living. Moreover, it undermines democratic accountability by delegating tax-raising authority to unelected bureaucrats. First, the proposed tax and fee hikes are substantial and disproportionate. The bill would increase the state gas tax from 40 cents to 46 cents per gallon, a 15% jump that will directly raise the cost of commuting, goods transportation, and everyday travel for families across Oregon.

Vehicle registration fees would nearly double in many cases, rising from \$43 to \$85 annually for passenger vehicles, adding unnecessary financial strain on vehicle owners, forcing them to drive illegally and reducing the safety of our children.

Title fees would skyrocket from \$77 to \$216, a more than 180% increase that could force people to drive illegally putting lives in danger.

Additionally, doubling the payroll tax for public transit from 0.1% to 0.2% effectively takes more out of every Oregonian's paycheck, regardless of whether they use transit services. Forcing big business out of Oregon and reducing the inclusivity of Oregonians

These changes are projected to generate \$791 million in the 2025-27 budget cycle alone, escalating to nearly \$5.8 billion by 2035—a staggering price tag that far exceeds what is necessary or fair making more Oregonians homeless and unable to pay their bills.

Oregon already has one of the highest gas taxes in the nation, and these increases come at a time when inflation and housing costs are squeezing household budgets. Rather than perpetually raising taxes, the state should prioritize efficient spending and address the root causes of ODOT's funding shortfalls, such as mismanagement and over-reliance on outdated revenue models. Critics have pointed out that Oregon's road-funding issues stem more from inefficient allocation than a true lack of resources.

Even more concerning is Section 12 of the bill, which would grant unelected officials at the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) the authority to automatically raise gas taxes and truck fees starting in 2030 under the guise of "fee equity." This theft has to stop.

This provision effectively hands over the Legislature's constitutional power to levy taxes to bureaucrats, bypassing future votes and public input. Such a move is undemocratic and sets a dangerous precedent for unchecked government expansion. Oregonians deserve transparency and accountability, not backdoor mechanisms that allow taxes to rise without oversight. I urge the committee to reject this bill in its current form and explore alternative solutions, such as reallocating existing funds, pursuing federal grants, or implementing true user-based fees without broad tax hikes. Our state can maintain safe roads and bridges without punishing residents with higher costs and diminished legislative control. Thank you for considering my testimony.