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On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Interim Committee On Transportation
Funding

Measure, Appointment or
Topic: LC 2

As a retiree living on a fixed income in Bend, I am alarmed by the proposed transportation tax bill. The rising taxes in our community have already strained my budget, and any additional taxes and fees will make daily life unbearable.

The Transportation Tax bill will drastically increase the cost of owning and operating a vehicle through several excessive measures, including:

- A 6-cent-per-gallon hike in the state gas tax
- Substantial increases in vehicle registration and title fees
- Higher fees and mandatory road usage charges for electric vehicles

Moreover, the proposed doubling of the statewide payroll tax that funds public transit, from 0.1% to 0.2%, will negatively impact not just workers but also businesses across Oregon. This could result in reduced hiring, lower wages, or even business closures, further worsening the economic challenges we face.

Imposing new taxes to fund the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) is not only irresponsible, but it also lacks transparency. ODOT has a troubling history of mismanagement and skyrocketing project costs. For example, the expense of the Abernathy Bridge project has more than tripled, and the estimated cost of the Rose Quarter project has ballooned from \$450 million to a staggering potential \$2.5 billion.

A report from the Brookings Institution clearly indicates that ODOT's over-reliance on consultants is a primary contributor to these inflated project costs. While the new Transportation Tax bill claims to include accountability measures, the effectiveness of such measures is highly questionable given ODOT's track record.

House Minority Leader Christine Drazen has rightly pointed out that ODOT already has enough funds to perform essential functions if the legislature would allow greater flexibility in how those funds can be utilized.

I demand that we explore alternatives that do not add to the financial burden of Oregonians. It's time to take a stand against unnecessary taxes that only exacerbate our struggles. Please consider alternatives that don't add to the financial burden of Oregonians.