

Submitter: Ariel Knox
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Interim Committee On Transportation
Funding
Measure, Appointment or LC 2
Topic:

My name is Ariel Knox. I am a disabled woman living on a fixed income in Oregon for the last 22 years. I was raised deep in the Redwoods in a rural community where we grew most of our own food because going to town to buy it cost too much time & money.

I know firsthand what it means when transportation costs rise. I was the friend who carpooled people to the grocery store or drove them to court because I was their only legal option. Public transportation didn't exist, taxis weren't available, & even if they had been, the fees would have been out of reach. That hasn't changed for many rural families today.

A gas tax hike that pushes the price to nearly 50 cents more per gallon will ripple through every part of life. The cost of groceries & delivery will rise. Families already losing hospitals in rural areas will delay medical care because they cannot afford the drive to the nearest one. Poor Oregonians will skip renewing their registration because they are stretched too thin, which means insurance lapses, & then rates go up for everyone when more uninsured drivers are on the road.

I grew up watching young people's entire adult lives derailed by traffic citations. Friends who stuck to back roads with expired tags got caught, lost their licenses, & lost their chance at stability. For people where an ambulance takes 90 minutes & the grocery store is 30 miles away, this isn't about convenience. It's about survival.

This tax will hit hardest on people making minimum wage & those living under the poverty line. Right now, that's \$31,200 a year for a family of four. Families at that income cannot absorb even a \$20 increase in weekly expenses.

If the state needs more revenue, the solution is not to squeeze struggling working families further. If we can't eat the rich, can we at least tax them?

Thank you for considering the impact this proposal will have on rural & low-income Oregonians.

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