

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

Dear Governor Kotek,

I am writing to strongly oppose the proposed tax increases being pushed by the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT). These proposed hikes — whether in the form of gas taxes, vehicle registration fees, or a new road usage charge — amount to taxation without fair representation.

ODOT's financial mismanagement should not be balanced on the backs of Oregon residents, many of whom are already struggling with the high cost of living, inflation, and stagnant wages. Your administration's continued pursuit of regressive taxes while many in the state face economic hardship is not only unfair — it's unacceptable.

Moreover, it is deeply troubling that a single individual — the Governor — has the power to appoint hundreds of state officials, including ODOT's top leadership and members of transportation-related commissions that directly influence policy and funding. When unelected bureaucrats, appointed rather than elected by the people, are making decisions that raise taxes and reduce public oversight, we have moved far from the principles of representative democracy. That is not how government in Oregon — or anywhere — should operate.

These tax proposals disproportionately hurt rural Oregonians, working families, and small businesses. Many of us have little to no access to public transportation and rely on our vehicles to get to work, school, and medical appointments. Instead of punishing drivers, your administration should focus on fixing wasteful spending, improving transparency, and holding ODOT accountable for its past fiscal failures.

If the state truly values equity and accountability, it must stop pushing new taxes without first earning the trust of the people. That begins with involving the public in major fiscal decisions, limiting the excessive power of gubernatorial appointments, and ensuring all voices are heard — not just those in the Capitol.

Governor Kotek, I urge you to reject these tax increases, rein in executive overreach, and demand a more accountable and transparent approach to state governance.