

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

Greetings,

As a voting constituent of Lake County I vehemently oppose the Governor's plan to cover the perceived ODOT budget shortfall or add to the funding of the mismanaged ODOT. The agency's funding woes are the simple result of two causes: mismanagement at the agency's upper levels AND financial malfeasance. The agency needs to quit spending its taxpayer funds on projects than asphalt, striping, plowing & bridge safety.

I reside in the north part of Lake County, where 54% of households have annual income at the HUD levels of low or moderate (2022 Portland State Univ/CVDWSD study). Our county's average population density is 1 person/1 sq mile (2020 US Census) and the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate has risen to 6.1% (June '25 US Bureau of Labor). There are 2 retail gas stations w/i 16-miles of my residence, both of which already have prices higher than the statewide average (30 cents/gal for gas, 5 cents/gal for diesel). The Governor's cavalier attitude in proposing excise tax hikes on fuel purchases, vehicle registration & title fees, and doubling of the payroll tax to my county's already depressed economy simply to put SOME of the increased revenue towards ODOT's core functions (asphalt, plowing, striping & bridge safety) is wrong-headed & reprehensible.

The solution to ODOT's budget woes isn't ODOT layoffs, station closures, or tax increases. It's harder than that. The solution is to reallocate funds from bloated non-essential programs within the agency itself as well as state-wide. For instance, move a few million dollars from OHA's \$40 billion 25/27 budget. No one with any sense of budget knowledge can argue that the healthcare industry is rife with corruption, inflated costs & mismanagement. A similar statement can be made regarding the state's SNAP funding & programs.

Any attempt to accept and pass any portion of this increased fees proposal will do nothing but further widen the economic divide & financial health of the 17 rural counties east of the Cascades from those within the rest of the state.

Again, NO on any proposed fee and tax increases.