

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

Thank you for your consideration of our comments. Our family of four registered voters understands the importance of fiscal responsibility. As with all Oregonians we do not have the ability to simply ask for additional money when times are tight. This is especially true if we make poor decisions about finances. This should hold true for state governments. Oregonians are taxed to the breaking point and it shows in the amount of businesses leaving the state or laying off employees to balance their budgets. The state government should not attempt to hold itself immune from these fiscal decisions by forcing individuals to bail out ODOT. Therefore we request a no vote on the additional taxes and fees including payroll taxes for transit with one exception.

The lone exception to the blanket dissent for additional revenues is the registration and use fees for electric vehicles. Careful evaluation must be done to ensure these vehicles pay their fair share. Currently they receive an almost free ride when using the highway system. This cannot be allowed to continue as the average owner of an electric vehicle is more affluent and should understand the need to pay for the maintenance and construction of the highway system they enjoy. A system that adds a tax based on their usage should be used to ensure proper payment is made.

Finally the legislative branch should not be allowed to abdicate responsibility by allowing an executive branch agency to raise taxes and fees. This destroys the separation of powers and should not be allowed in this or any other bill. The legislature was created to wield taxing authority as elected representatives of the people. Allowing agencies to wield this authority means that unelected and unaccountable staff is unacceptable and is not in line with a representative government. The legislature must take the time to help ODOT prioritize their services to ensure they are protected for the largest number of citizens. One way to start this discussion is to return to the original name of the agency, which was the "highway department." This is the obvious priority as it affects all citizens whether they drive a vehicle or not, they receive goods that travel on the highway. The highways must be maintained first, and not at the current 6% of the budget, then subsequent issues can be addressed as money becomes available.

Thank you for your consideration of our families testimony.