

Submitter: Michelle Milla

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Interim Committee On Transportation  
Funding

Measure, Appointment or  
Topic: LC 2

To: Joint Interim Committee on Transportation Funding (Public Hearing August 25, 2025)

Re: Testimony: LC 2 – Transportation Funding

Dear Co-Chair Wagner, Co-Chair Fahey, Co-Vice Chair Drazan, Co-Vice Chair Bonham and Members of the Committee,

My name is Michelle Milla, and I live in the Stadium neighborhood in Northwest Portland. I urge you to pair any new revenue with accountability and flexibility.

ODOT faces a \$350 million shortfall, with nearly 500 frontline workers at risk of layoffs. These are the people who plow snow, clear wildlife brush and patch potholes. They keep us moving. The crisis stems from a reported \$1 billion error in ODOT's outdated cash flow model. On top of that, they are legally restricted from shifting existing funds to cover essential maintenance.

The current measure in question will make us pay more, and without reforms, we may not even see safer roads. Note that Oregon has raised revenue before with oversight built in:

2013: Gov. Kitzhaber's "Grand Bargain" paired taxes with structural reform;  
2017: Gov. Brown's "Keep Oregon Moving" raised gas taxes, but only if performance targets were met; and  
2019: The Student Success Act added a new corporate tax, but tied it to a clear education framework.

Beyond Oregon in 2003, California Gov. Gray Davis tripled vehicle fees overnight. The backlash was so intense it fueled his recall. That's the danger of raising costs without public trust. If you push this package through as is, you will add to the momentum that is fueling the Portland doom loop of mismanagement and mistrust.

We implore this legislature to make this "first step" the right one that includes independent audits outside internal ODOT reviews, maintenance-first worker protections, performance triggers and statutory flexibility so every dollar actually improves safety on the ground. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Michelle Milla