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On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Interim Committee On Transportation  
Funding

Measure, Appointment or  
Topic: LC 2

I believe that a 6 cent fuel tax will not be as great a burden on families as other provisions in the bill. I am very concerned that dramatically increased registration fees and title change fees will have a disproportionate impact on vulnerable families. The new fees for title and registration would add up to more than \$300. A single parent with a 20-year-old vehicle and a minimum wage job in Eastern Oregon would work more than 20 hours (pre-tax) just to pay those fees. Because of the lack of public transit, most families need a car to get to and from work, get their children to day care, etc. For families having to choose between paying the electric bill or pay for groceries, when SNAP benefits and health care are being cut and housing programs have a 2-year waiting period, this could be a breaking point.

The EV registration fee and ultimate user charge could be fair so long as the state invests in EV charging infrastructure throughout Oregon. We should also be increasing tax incentives for EV ownership as a reward for air quality improvements.

I am also concerned that the new ODOT proposal includes funding for high-dollar construction projects in urban areas. The current crisis relates to road maintenance, particularly snow plowing in rural Oregon. With no Greyhound buses, no commercial air service or Amtrak, rural Oregonians are severely restricted in terms of transportation options and much more reliant on Oregon roads to grocery shop, get supplies, and go to the doctor. When the freeways are closed, as they are often in the winter, we lose access to the mail which may include medicine. While I understand that urban populations overall pay more in taxes, they also rely on the goods trucked in on Oregon freeways. And I have concerns that our legislators will get tied up in a fight competing over special projects vs. road maintenance and safety.

While not directly related to revenues for ODOT, the vast majority of freeway closures in Eastern Oregon are caused by freight truck accidents. I can't count the times that I've been passed by a freight truck traveling 80 mph or more over a mountain pass in a 65 mph zone. It is terrifying, and because Oregon law doesn't have a per-axle fine, truck drivers with a massive load and multiple trailers are subject to the same speeding ticket as my passenger car. Adding a prohibitive fine on the truck owner for commercial vehicles that cause accidents and road closures could help reduce accidents and the associated costs. It could also reduce carbon pollution from the hundreds of vehicles waiting on snow-covered freeways for the roads to reopen, and reduce emergency responder costs when drivers get stuck in the snow looking for an

alternate route around a freeway closure.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. I am hopeful that the Committee will take up narrow legislation to maintain roads, highways and freeways in this emergency session, and go back to a more bipartisan and collaborative effort in the future. I also hope that in future efforts, the state will consider lessons learned from projects like the failed transload facilities.