

Dear Chairpersons, Committee Members, and Staff:

I am writing today to express my qualified support for **LC 02**, the draft bill introduced during the 2025 Special Session to enhance Oregon's transportation infrastructure. I am deeply invested in economic vitality, environmental sustainability, and fiscal accountability of our state, I believe LC 02 demonstrates a conscientious step forward and an improvement upon the last bill. At the same time, certain provisions warrant further revision to ensure the funding package remains equitable and practical.

I respectfully urge the committee to advance LC 02—with thoughtful modifications:

Provision	Proposed Change/Support
Vehicle Title Fee	Amend to maximum <b>\$150</b>
Gas Tax	Approve <b>\$0.46/gal</b> , still significantly less than California and Washington
EV Contribution Mechanism	Seek simpler, low-overhead alternatives to OregGo
Weight-Mile Tax Rates	Simplify from 85 categories to <b>10 tiers</b>
Oversight & Auditing	Require regular performance audits and legislative reporting

I further elaborate my comment below:

### 1. Vehicle Title Fee: Adjust to a Fairer Scale

Under LC 02, the proposed increase in the vehicle title fee—from **\$77 to \$216**—represents a considerable \$139 jump. While I understand the urgency of raising additional revenues, this scale may impose undue financial stress on many Oregonians, particularly those purchasing lower-cost vehicles or in rural areas (like where I live) where transportation is essential. I propose a more moderate cap of **\$150**, which still allows for increased revenue but eases the burden on working rural Oregonians.

### 2. Gas Tax – A Balanced, Environmentally Sound Increase

I appreciate the effort to raise Oregon's gas tax from **\$0.40 to \$0.46** per gallon—generating approximately **\$90 million annually**—as a means to both fund infrastructure and encourage reduced fossil fuel consumption. Given that Oregoners already enjoy relatively low gas prices compared to other neighboring states, this measured increase aligns with both fiscal responsibility and environmental stewardship.

### 3. EV Contribution on miles actually driven without Burdensome Schemes

As electric vehicle adoption grows and gas-tax revenues naturally decline, it is critical that EV owners, especially from visiting from Washington and California, contribute fairly to the upkeep of our roads. However, I have reservations regarding the proposed **OregGo program**, which seems administratively complex and solely places the burden on volunteer Oregonians. In comparison to tolling regimes—which often face public resistance—I believe we should prioritize another approach that effectively captures the use per driver, regardless of where their vehicle is registered.

#### **4. Streamlining Freight Engagement: Weight-Mile Tax Reduction**

I support consolidating the current 85 weight-mile categories into just **10 tiers**. This compression would greatly reduce administrative complexity for both trucking firms and the government, lowering compliance costs and improving clarity—without undercutting revenue or fairness in taxing heavy-road users.

#### **5. Ensuring Accountability: Regular Audits and Legislative Oversight**

Finally, I strongly urge the inclusion of **periodic performance audits** conducted by the Secretary of State's Audits Division, with results shared directly with the Legislature. These audits should particularly focus on **mega-projects** and the deliberations of the **Transportation Commission**. Transparent tracking of timelines, budgets, and outcomes is essential—especially in light of public concerns over historical cost overruns. Enhanced accountability not only builds trust but incentivizes better governance.

By adjusting these provisions, Oregon can secure much-needed infrastructure funding while maintaining fairness, efficiency, and integrity in the process.

Thank you for your time, your dedication to our state, and your openness to public input.

Respectfully submitted,

Darlene Khalafi

Registered voter of Newport, Lincoln County.