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On Behalf Of:
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Funding
Measure, Appointment or LC 2
Topic:
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I am opposed to any taxes, be they gas taxes, payroll taxes, or registration fees being used to build new roads or change, improve or repair existing roads. For as long as I can remember, the Oregon Legislature has been stupid about public transportation. They have refused to put a portion of gas tax towards building a comprehensive modern public transportation system, instead claiming that gas taxes should only fund roads. So now we are stuck with thousands of square miles of pavement, and no way to get anywhere unless we own a car. Many people can no longer afford to own a home, but they still have to have a car. Cars are the new houses. And the number of cars and the width of roads has made it continually less and less safe to walk or use a bicycle even for short trips close to home.

Unless and until every single person in this state has safe, reliable, and convenient options to using a car for any purpose, whether it be going to work or going to the grocery store or traveling to the city, NOT ONE CENT should be spent on roads. It is NOT reasonable to expect people, who you have forced into car ownership so they can get to their jobs so they can earn money to pay for the car that they need in order to get to their jobs, to pay even more tax to build more roads instead of to build a system that gives them an option. Give ODOT enough money to keep existing roads clear of debris and snow. That's all they need. Then put all the rest of the money into building a system as quickly as you can so we don't need all those roads. Convert them to bike lanes. Make it convenient and easy to use transit and much more difficult to drive anywhere.

This all may sound radical, but it isn't. It is radical to develop our country to benefit the automobile and oil companies instead of people and communities. Towns are no longer gathering places for people because they are parking places for cars. You can't sit on the sidewalk in downtown Newberg and enjoy a meal and conversation because of the incessant traffic and fumes going by. It is completely absurd. Oil companies have profited enormously from lobbying for massive car use to the detriment of public transportation and quality of life. Oil companies profit from people driving. They profit from pavement. We had better public transportation 100 years ago than we do now.

The only people who should pay a tax on gas or a payroll tax should be those who have a good option available (safe bike route or safe reliable convenient public transportation) to get everywhere they need to go and choose to use a car anyway. Other people should not be penalized.

Other countries in the world have managed to do this. In many places in the world

people walk no more than a few blocks from their home and connect with public transit that takes them directly where they need to go if close, or connects them to a transit center with options to go anywhere on the continent, safely and efficiently. There is no reason we can't do that here. It's all a matter of priority, and it is not sustainable to continue to prioritize cars over people.