

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

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed LC 2 transportation funding bill. Oregon families and small businesses are already stretched to the limit, and additional tax and fee increases are simply not sustainable or fair.

The Legislature's most recent budget framework highlights nearly \$987 million in surplus funds available after allocations, yet lawmakers are still asking taxpayers for more. At the same time, revenue forecasts show a reduction of roughly \$500–756 million compared to projections. Beyond this, there are blatant imbalances in how money is distributed: the Paid Leave Oregon program budget more than doubled (a 120% increase), while ODOT's capital maintenance funding dropped nearly 39%, despite ongoing infrastructure needs. Similarly, the State Police lost 17% of lottery funding, only to have the gap backfilled with General Fund dollars. These examples demonstrate that Oregon doesn't lack resources—it lacks balanced priorities. Reallocation, not taxation, should be the solution.

There is also a troubling inequity within state agencies like ODOT. Highly paid middle managers often work just a few days a week in the office, while the front-line staff—the very people who maintain our roads and keep Oregon moving, face the risk of layoffs. Even more concerning, the state is using scare tactics by threatening to lay off the very workers who keep our roads safe in order to pressure lawmakers and the public into supporting this bill. If cutbacks must be made, they should come from unnecessary administrative overhead, not from the essential workers who serve our communities every day.

Oregon deserves leaders willing to think differently about budgeting, leaders who can demonstrate fiscal responsibility, streamline management, and protect the workforce that delivers the services people actually depend on. Covering overspending with higher taxes has become the easy answer. Now is the time to choose the harder but better path: rebalancing priorities, trimming inefficiencies, and respecting the contributions of taxpayers.

Thank you for considering this perspective. I urge you to reject LC 2 and instead take this opportunity to lead with a renewed mindset; one that focuses on reform, fairness, and long-term responsibility.

Heather L. Baumgartner

Oregon Citizen

Proud Owner of a Woman- and Veteran-Owned Small Business