

Submitter: Cathy Lewis-Dougherty
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Interim Committee On Transportation
Funding
Measure, Appointment or LC 2
Topic:

I am writing in support of passing the current transportation bill to maintain maintenance and safety of our transportation system at current levels of function. But please note, I view this as an interim measure as it does not adequately address the need for increased transit, building out of adequate rail systems (both freight and passenger), important safety measures such as Safe Routes to School and Great Streets, and emissions accountability.

I support an increase in the gas tax as a much overdue step toward stabilizing transportation funding and facilitating the transition to less polluting vehicles, and encourage further steps to keep the tax in line with inflation, as we have not done for many years.

At the same time, we empathize with Oregonians who struggle to afford an increase in taxes. To minimize the tax increase and conserve scarce funding, the Legislature should prioritize those major projects that are essential to maintain public safety, but put on hold major projects that are not related to immediate safety issues and are not fully funded. It is not fiscally responsible to start major freeway widening if we don't have all the funds. We recommend that the legislature redirect monies to safety, maintenance and emissions reductions.

It is critical to maintain Oregon's focus on meeting climate goals. Every day we contend with the increasing dangers of climate change. In future legislative sessions, we need EV infrastructure support, enhanced rolling and walking infrastructure, and a modernized system of transit and rail. These measures will reduce wear and tear on our highways, reducing maintenance costs.

Thank you for taking these views into account as you act on the draft legislation this week.

Cathy Lewis-Dougherty