



**Testimony to the Joint Interim Committee on Transportation Funding
re: LC 2**

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**Kristopher Fortin Grijalva, Transportation Program Director
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Founded in 1968, the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership-based organization. We advance equitable, innovative, and collaborative solutions to Oregon's environmental challenges for today and future generations.

Re: Oregon Environmental Council neutral on LC 2

Dear Co-Chairs Fahey and Wagner, Vice Chairs Drazen and Bonham, and members of the committee,

My name is Kristopher Fortin Grijalva, transportation program director at Oregon Environmental Council. We appreciate the members of the Committee reconvening to keep the government functioning and public transit service from deep cuts. But this budget patch isn't enough, and our work isn't done. We need to come back in 2026 and 2027 to pass a transportation package that meets the needs of all Oregonians- that invests in safety and climate, is affordable, and includes ODOT accountability and transparency.

Oregonians came together to ask for a safe, clean, affordable transportation package. We need to build on the work in 2025 and deliver a package that meets these needs in 2026 and 2027.

A transportation package is an opportunity to invest in what matters most to our communities: safe streets, clean air, and reliable transit. To truly deliver for all Oregonians, including the 30% who don't or can't drive, we need a package that prioritizes access, equity, and sustainability.

As drafted, this package will fail to deliver needed investments in clean, electric vehicles or charging infrastructure, while simultaneously imposing punishing new fees that specifically target electric vehicle drivers.

The Road Usage Charge for electric vehicles is set to tax Oregon EV drivers the equivalent gas tax of a 20-MPG vehicle. This means overcharges on EVs, and hits high-mileage rural drivers hardest. The Road Usage Charge needs to be re-evaluated noting how Oregon's MPG average is much closer to 30MPG, with that number only estimated to go up by state agencies. The simple fix: reset the MPG index to 30-40 MPG to ensure equity for EV's. That one change protects rural households, and preserves the trust and clarity this precedent-setting program needs.

This budget stopgap does not include any investments that address climate change and air pollution through clean, electric transportation. In fact, because of how the RUC is structured, It actually makes driving an EV more expensive than the average vehicle on Oregon streets in terms of taxes paid. Sending the wrong signal for both climate and economic justice, while also facing massive federal funding whiplash. Without action, we risk making the climate crisis worse.

Without key investments to put more clean cars and clean trucks on our roads, Oregon's transportation system risks increasing air and climate pollution. This is exactly the opposite of what we should be doing as a state in 2025.

Air pollution from transportation is killing and sickening us, particularly in urban areas of our state. 19 of 36 counties in Oregon, from Washington to Malheur, have diesel pollution high enough to increase one's lifetime risk for cancer and lung disease. In many instances, diesel pollution is 3-4 times the public health

threshold. This has the same public health risk factor as smoking 5-6 cigarettes a week, with that closer to 10 a day if people live close to a highway.

We can't afford to wait. We must come back in the next legislative sessions to build a future where every Oregonian has access to safe, reliable, and sustainable transportation options. I urge you to remember that this budget stopgap is the bare minimum of what Oregonians require. We must come back to pass a transportation package that moves Oregon forward.

Sincerely,

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