

Submitter: Gary Barth

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Interim Committee On Transportation
Funding

Measure, Appointment or
Topic: LC 2

I support a NO vote on any transportation tax, red or related revenue increases absent significant cost reductions and organizational restructuring of the Oregon Department of Transportation. The agency has a long history of inefficiency resulting in project cost overruns and missed deadlines. The salary and benefit packages contained in "negotiated" collective bargaining agreements for public employees including those at ODOT regularly exceed the projected revenue growth. This trend results in fewer and fewer dollars available for the repair and replacement of capital assets. It is common for public employees to negotiate annual cost of living increases AND merit increases which combined greatly exceed the rate of revenue growth and there is no performance metric tied to those salaries. Employees rarely face job elimination or termination once hired and have zero incentive to deliver projects and services on time and within budget. In the private sector, merit increases ARE cost of living increases and tied to performance. I would support some revenue approaches such as indexing the gas tax to the Consumer Price Index - which should have been done decades ago - but only AFTER a massive shakeup at ODOT starting at the top. Oregon has one of the worst state highway systems in the country based on my personal experience traveling other states. ODOT needs a robust capital improvement plan that prioritizes maintaining the existing asset base based on objective scoring criteria as well as newly proposed projects that achieve essential outcomes AND can be adequately maintained once constructed. Then they need to work with existing revenue to accomplish as much as possible TIMELY AND EFFICIENTLY. Prove they can deliver outstanding outcomes with existing revenue before any increases in taxes or fees.