

Submitter: Kevin Kincaid

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation Reinvestment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2025

Co-Chairs Gorsek and McLain, and members of the Committee,

I am writing to you to discuss HB 2025, or the Transportation Re-Investment Package. This bill is vitally important given the ongoing threats of climate change and the monetary issues with our current transportation infrastructure. In order to create a transportation system that works for Oregon, the legislature should support public transportation and reduce support for ODOT's continuous highway expansions.

Like much of the US, Oregonians are suffering from inflation and a rapidly rising cost of living. As such, any new taxes should be carefully considered to make sure they serve the interests of the people of Oregon. Our current road and highway system is unsustainable, with people across the state asking for better maintenance and safety. Instead, ODOT has repeatedly prioritized spending money on highway expansions that inevitably have massive cost overruns, and only induce additional driving and congestion. ODOT themselves admit they do not have the money for maintenance on the current roads, yet they repeatedly ask for hundreds of millions in funding so they can add more lanes they cannot maintain. Additional funding from this bill for roads should be prioritized to maintenance rather than highway expansions. The transfer tax in particular should only be used to fund multimodal safety programs, or it should be removed entirely from this bill.

Given the ongoing threats of climate change and the rising expenses associated from owning a car, Oregon should be investing in developing it's bus and rail network. I am happy to see that the transit service tax was increased to 0.3%. Additional transit funding is essential to building out local transit networks, especially in rural areas. The funds from this tax have already allowed expanded transit services in Corvallis area, including increased bus frequency, electrified buses, and better connections to neighboring cities. This increase in funding will further expand bus projects across the state, and allow people to reduce the necessity of using a car for daily trips. Additionally, I am glad that Oregon is investing money from the dealership tax towards rail projects. Oregonians have had record breaking Amtrak ridership recently, and the state should respond to that increased demand by increasing frequency and building rail projects to more cities.

I hope you amend this bill to prioritize road maintenance and transit over costly highway expansions. Thank you for your time,

Sincerely,
Kevin Kincaid