

Tolling Electric Vehicles

Tolling roads is not popular with Oregonians and is a poor way to pay for roads. It is inconvenient and wastes money on special equipment and overhead. Toll charges in other states often rise to ridiculous levels, while road quality is frequently poor on tollways.

Why then does HB 3991A begin a mandatory tolling program for electric vehicles? The intention of HB 3991A is to increase taxes enormously on Oregon drivers (while masquerading with the disingenuous summary on OLIS reading: “Directs the Division of Audits to conduct performance audits of the Department of Transportation.”)

One of these taxes is a “Road Usage Charge” for hybrid and electric vehicles that is essentially a tolling program for every road in Oregon.

I live in a conservative district which is not wealthy. There are fewer electric vehicles because of their high prices, inconvenience, and a lack of interest in spending twice as much on an inferior car. However, I have found that even drivers of gas-powered cars are opposed to this program.

It is obvious that a new bureaucracy involving a required government computer link to your car, is invasive (or could be in the future), requires tolling accounts, will be expensive, and eventually is likely to be expanded to every car in the state.

Only two percent of Oregon cars are electric. We do not know when or if advances in battery technology will make them practical. Why subsidize them and simultaneously complain that they don’t pay fuel taxes?

We should not put tolls on every road in Oregon and then pretend we aren’t tolling by calling them a “Road Usage Charge.”

Thank you, Mr. President.

This is a formal remonstrance for the Senate Journal pursuant to Senate Rule 101 (12) and Or Const Art IV Sec 26.