

Submitter: Beth Morey

On Behalf of: Oregon tax payers

Committee: Joint Special Session Committee on Transportation Funding  
HB 3991

As miniscule as it may seem for 0.06 tax increase, I cannot afford more expenses. Even when I do not purchase anything extra above monthly expenses, and I delay hiring professionals like mechanics or HVAC cleaners (which all have become costlier), my monthly costs have increased 30%. Power, water, internet, garbage, cell phone plans have increased 30%. There is nothing I can do to keep those costs at the level my income was previously managing. So another gas tax increase weighs heavy on my budget.

Out of all the concerns I have if this bill passes, the most troubling one is SECTION 12 which allows UNELECTED ODOT officials the power to raise gas taxes and truck fees - - AUTOMATICALLY - - every two years. Upon completion of their agency study every two years, ODOT may adjust fuel taxes and truck fees if my legislators do not act within 120 days. There should be no timeline that elapses without legislator action which enables non-elected officials to raise taxes. My legislators simply need to stall 120 days to let a tax increase go into effect that their constituents can't blame on them. They can defer the blame on ODOT to not be held accountable to those who will vote them into office again. Those few cents raises in gas taxes - every two years - affect my own gas tank, while also affecting everything else I purchase because providers must pass along the increase to their fuel costs.

An example of proven distrust we citizens have in ODOT is the I-5 Rose Quarter project which legislators authorized spending for on a makes-sense solution for highway safety and congestion relief....EIGHT YEARS ago. Eight years ago funding was made available, and yet ODOT needs more money because the \$450 million dollar project has ballooned into a \$1.9 BILLION dollar project with urban development features that were not part of the plans approved. 2017 legislators and taxpayers approved funding for a functional freeway cover to reconnect surface streets. They did not approve climate justice initiatives or multimodal connectivity.. This project was sold to taxpayers as a transportation investment. It has morphed into far more than fixing congestion and highway safety.

ODOT misuses existing funds. 1/3 of their maintenance budget goes to homeless camp cleanup. My gas taxes are meant for roads. Maintenance employees need not be laid off to divert funds for the Rose Quarter project or homeless camp cleanup. Again, my gas taxes are meant for deteriorating rural roads, repairs for bridges and highways, and snow plowing.

Please vote NO on the Transportation Tax Package.

Beth Morey