

Submitter: Devon Lawson
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Special Session Committee On Transportation
Funding
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3991

This plan is too expensive for Oregon families right now.

HB 3991 stacks new transportation charges on people who are already stretched. At the pump, at the DMV, and on every mile they drive. The package adds taxes and fees and makes a per-mile “road usage” charge mandatory for electric and hybrid cars (with a \$340 annual fee option), on top of other increases. That’s not theoretical; it’s in the bill text and public explanations of the package.

Oregonians are paying more for rent, food, child care, insurance, and utilities. Piling on a higher gas tax and higher vehicle fees is the wrong tool for the moment. Reporting this week underscores a proposed six-cent per-gallon hike from 40¢ to 46¢ and new DMV fee increases. Costs that hit paychecks immediately.

HB3991 raises day-to-day costs without fixing the root issues. A higher gas tax, higher registration/title fees, and a new EV per-mile charge are blunt instruments that increase the cost of work commutes, school drop-offs, and grocery runs, especially for people who must drive because transit or safe walking/biking simply aren’t available.

HB3991 channels most new revenue into car-centric uses, with legal strings. Oregon’s Constitution (Article IX §3a) locks fuel and motor-vehicle taxes/fees to “highway purposes.” That means the lion’s share of new money can’t be spent on the near-term, non-auto upgrades families actually feel, like frequent local buses, protected crosswalks, and sidewalks, except in narrow right-of-way cases.

HB3991 penalizes clean cars and invites data worries.

HB 3991 makes a per-mile charge mandatory for EVs/hybrids starting in 2027 (~2–2.3¢/mile under the bill’s formula) or a \$340 flat fee, exactly when we should be accelerating the shift away from gas. Even with privacy provisions, the bill explicitly relies on third-party “certified service providers” to meter and process charges, capped at keeping up to 10% of collections. Money that should stay with Oregon roads, not vendors.

HB3991 recentralizes power and removes a useful tool.

The bill flips the ODOT director to a gubernatorial appointment and repeals the statewide toll program instead of fixing it. That’s a top-down move that shrinks local problem-solving options like equity-designed congestion pricing or corridor demand

management that can actually reduce traffic and fund local alternatives.

Vote NO on HB 3991 as written and come back with a package that meets families where they are. Lower recurring costs, visible neighborhood upgrades within 12–24 months, and strict accountability for every dollar.

HB3991, as written, asks families to pay more now for a status quo they can't afford, while limiting the very local tools that would cut traffic, costs, and emissions fastest. Vote NO, keep the audits, and bring back a people-first, fix-it-first plan that delivers tangible neighborhood upgrades within a year, keeps data private, and spends every dollar where Oregonians can see it work.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Devon Lawson