

Submitter: Tony Pokorny
On Behalf Of: Over taxed Oregonian's
Committee: Joint Special Session Committee On Transportation
Funding
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3991

Greetings Oregon State Legislative Representatives;

I'm Tony Pokorny, a 3rd generation Oregonian born and raised voter. I'm sure this method of addressing everyone is not the most preferred, but what I have to say I want everyone to know, my message being the same to all of Oregon Legislature.

HB3991 has put a spotlight on transportation funding and the ODOT revenue structure. The proposed tax increases, framed as necessary for maintaining roads, bridges, and infrastructure, may in fact create more harm than good for everyday Oregonians.

First, the measure adds another layer of financial strain on working families already facing record housing costs, rising utility bills, and inflationary pressure. By increasing fuel taxes, registration fees, and potentially implementing road-usage charges, the state risks penalizing residents simply for commuting to work, school, or medical care. Rural Oregonians, who drive longer distances and lack access to mass transit, will be disproportionately burdened compared to urban residents. This creates an inequitable system that places the highest costs on those with the fewest transportation alternatives.

Second, ODOT's track record raises concerns about whether new tax revenue will actually improve infrastructure. Previous audits have flagged inefficiencies and mismanagement in project delivery. Without stronger oversight and cost-control mechanisms, funneling more taxpayer money into the agency risks perpetuating waste rather than producing tangible benefits. Raising taxes without first proving fiscal accountability undermines public trust.

Third, the bill fails to account for the economic ripple effect. Higher transportation taxes directly increase the cost of goods and services since most items in Oregon move by truck. Groceries, building supplies, and essential household goods will all rise in price, squeezing family budgets further. What is sold as a "user fee" ultimately trickles into every corner of the state economy, compounding inflation and weakening Oregon's competitiveness as a place to live and do business.

Finally, this approach does not sufficiently invest in long-term alternatives. Instead of doubling down on a regressive taxation model, Oregon could emphasize efficiency reforms, reprioritizing spending, and targeted innovation in public transit and

infrastructure design. True sustainability requires creative restructuring, not merely higher tax burdens.

In short, while the intent of the special session bill may be to secure funding for ODOT, the chosen path extracts more from struggling households, lacks accountability guarantees, inflates consumer costs, and misses the opportunity for reform. For many Oregonians, the proposal feels less like a solution and more like a destructive cycle of taxation without clear, measurable benefits.

In the end, pass the ODOT tax bill. Seriously, pass it. What will happen in return is folks looking to leave Oregon in larger numbers, more than folks moving into Oregon. Further, as seen in last Presidential election, every county in the US shifted Conservative, including Portland metro area. This will only push Oregonians further Conservative. With that sort of shift, some of you Democrats may or will find your next election much harder and perhaps lose to a Republican in the long run. As it is, Oregonians tire being lied to about taxing the rich when the poor are taxed more so, like this ODOT tax ordeal targets poorer people.

In the end, short term it will hurt Oregonians while in the long term, this will affect all of you Representatives and Senators next election and Gov. Kotek's recall even easier. Even Democrat voters are signing the recall. So, by all means, Democrats, pass it. As Obama stated once, "Elections have Consequences." also consequences in disregarding your constituents. In the end, only special interest getting funding only want this to pass.

Best regards and think hard on this.

Tony Pokorny
An Oregonian Voter