

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

Dear Oregon Legislators:

Roads and bridges support Oregon commerce and worker commutes. Commerce and jobs are where tax revenues come from. Roads and bridges are one of the legislatures' PRIMARY responsibilities. Speaker Fahey is quoted (OR Capital Chronicle) saying, "Our economy and local communities depend on safe and reliable roads and bridges". Rather than deal with safe reliable roads first you paid for "camera ready" priorities like free medical, food, housing and lawyers for illegal immigrants and homeless drug addicts.

You spent our road money on other political priorities and now you come back to the trough for more taxes, threatening our roads and DOT workers' jobs. You told DOT employees they would be furloughed, but of course held off so the DOT workers are motivated to lobby hard for your new taxes. Politics at its worst.

Oregon citizens are taxed at higher rates than most of the other states, yet the services delivered to Oregon tax-paying citizens are near the bottom. For example, Oregon spends \$19,367 per K-12 student, but national standardized testing shows our fourth-graders are worse off than even Alabama and Mississippi students. Idaho spends less than half that (\$9387), and their students rank higher than ours.

According to the Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF), Oregon spends \$12,677 per resident. Similarly populated states' expenses per resident are Utah (\$6812), Connecticut (\$11,686), Oklahoma (\$7207), Louisiana (\$9376), Kentucky (\$10,908) and Alabama (\$7924). You are spending Mercedes money and delivering Yugo results.

We can't afford more woke priorities and perma-dependency programs. We must afford roads. For now, you can take money from the "Innovative Mobility", "Community Paths" and bike lanes programs and redirect for roads and bridges because the majority of tax-paying workers drive. You aren't removing existing pathways, just holding off on new ones. That is close to \$100 Million. You can take slices of money from other spending, but quit punishing taxpayers.

The so-called "Healthier Oregon" program provides free medical care for 105,000 unauthorized immigrants (\$1.5 Billion). You created and advertised a magnet for new dependents. We have our own poor.

You fund organizations to “help” the druggies who arrived after you talked Oregon into Measure 110. The January 2025 “point in time” survey found 14,400 homeless in the PDX metro area. The Oregonian reports \$724 Million spent last year on homeless services or \$50,000 per person. Been downtown recently? They aren’t getting the money.

Find the money somewhere other than our pockets. Employers and skilled workers are already leaving for better states. We can’t see what we are getting for all those taxes. Roads are one of your PRIMARY responsibilities, not an afterthought. You already have enough money. Re-allocate to pay for the roads.