

Submitter: Michelle Blackwell
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Special Session Committee On Transportation
Funding
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3992

August 30, 2025

Honorable Members of the Legislature:

I submit this written testimony in opposition to House Bills 3991 and 3992, speaking as a practicing attorney, business owner, longtime Oregon resident and volunteer at the Oregon Country Fair, and mother who has raised children in this state. My husband represents the 6th generation of his family to call Oregon home, giving us deep roots in this community and a vested interest in Oregon's fiscal future and wellbeing.

Primary Areas of Concern

1. Lack of Public Support and Circumvention of Democratic Process

Similar comprehensive transportation tax packages (including the failed HB 2025) were previously rejected by the Legislature due to lack of support, demonstrating clear opposition to these types of broad tax increases. Bringing back essentially the same proposal in a special session after it was rejected raises serious questions about representative governance and fiscal responsibility.

2. Comprehensive Tax and Fee Increases Across Multiple Sectors

House Bills 3991 and 3992 propose extensive tax and fee increases that extend far beyond transportation, including gas tax increases, vehicle registration and title fee hikes, payroll tax increases, and mandatory per-mile road usage charges for electric and hybrid vehicles. The cumulative impact of these wide-ranging increases will disproportionately burden working families and small businesses who are already struggling with inflation and economic uncertainty.

3. Accountability and Fiscal Management

Before considering new revenue streams across any sector, the state must demonstrate responsible stewardship of existing funds. Recent reports indicate significant unaccounted expenditures within ODOT's budget. Taxpayers deserve transparency and accountability before being asked to contribute additional funds through expanded taxation.

4. Economic Impact on Business Community

As a business owner, I am concerned about the cumulative effect of tax increases on

Oregon's economic competitiveness. Small businesses and professional practices are already facing numerous financial pressures, and additional tax burdens may impact job creation and business retention in our state.

Recommendations

I respectfully urge the committee to:

- Delay consideration until comprehensive auditing of existing transportation funds is completed
- Provide detailed accounting of current ODOT expenditures and outcomes
- Schedule additional public hearings at times that allow broader community participation
- Consider alternative funding mechanisms that do not increase the tax burden on families and businesses

Conclusion

While I support well-managed transportation infrastructure investments, fiscal responsibility and public accountability must be prerequisites for any new taxation. I encourage the committee to address these fundamental concerns before moving forward with this proposal.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Respectfully submitted,

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