

Submitter: Kevin Lambert

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Special Session Committee On Transportation
Funding

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3992

I am writing to express my **STRONG OPPOSITION** to a bill that raises the gasoline tax, raises registration fees, doubles payroll tax, and institutes yet another tax in 2027 on the amount of miles I drive.

Four tax increases in one weekend, in a panicked session, under a new title that skirts and ignored testimony submitted for Friday's special session is not the way to govern and would be a slap in the face to Oregonians. When both the ODOT Financial Reports and the Legislative Revenue Office say that 2024 fee revenue broke records, and that ODOT revenue increased 30% between 2018 and 2024, Oregonians deserve a full-court press explanation on who is lying, since this in direct opposition to Governor Kotek's assertion that gasoline taxes simply cannot keep up with necessary expenditures. I, for now, am convinced that this crisis is the result of financial mismanagement rather than revenue shortfalls, and four new taxes is rewarding bad policy choices.

There is clearly a problem, and no sign of any honest introspection within the state capitol. We are already among the highest-taxed constituents in the entire country, and none of us has the right or ability to simply bleed our neighbors dry for more money the way our legislators do.

It is clear that the 2017 transportation tax increase was not used for its intended, advertised purpose, and I am upset that there would be no repercussions for the taxpayer deceit, but rather a handsome payout for more of the same suspicious decision-making in Salem. There are myriad reasons why the massive ODOT bureaucracy is in trouble, and this cannot be wholesale blamed on missing income from hybrid and electric vehicle owners not paying gas taxes.

Last week, KOIN6 reported on Oregon's earning the "4th-worst state to move to" on a ConsumerAffairs list, which is shocking given how popular Oregon was just a decade ago. The shine has lost its luster, and it's not for a lack of spending money. The upper-level ODOT hiring spree over the last decade, plus policy hand-tying around Project Labor Agreements, EV mandates, and climate protection are guzzling our money that could be spent exponentially more efficiently on actual construction that solves problems.