

Submitter: Suraj Sindia

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Special Session Committee On Transportation
Funding

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3991

To the Honorable Members of the House and Senate Committees,
Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the proposed legislation regarding the Oregon Department of Transportation's funding shortfall. I am writing today to voice my strong opposition to both the proposed tax and fee increases in HB3991, as well as the alternative proposal to redirect funds from other essential transportation programs.

The first proposal, which includes a six-cent gas tax increase, higher registration and title fees, and a mandatory per-mile road usage charge, would place an unacceptable financial burden on Oregon's families and small businesses. We are already grappling with the rising cost of living, and these new taxes and fees would make it even harder for us to commute to work, transport goods, and simply live our lives. The concept of a mandatory per-mile charge is particularly concerning, as it would be a new tax on every mile driven and raises serious questions about privacy and the long-term impact on vehicle ownership.

While I understand the need to address ODOT's funding issues, the alternative proposal to redirect money from programs like pedestrian safety, bike infrastructure, public transit, and climate initiatives is equally flawed. These programs are not "wasteful spending" but are instead a vital part of a forward-thinking, multi-modal transportation system. Shifting these funds would jeopardize critical safety projects and undermine our state's long-term goals for sustainability and livability. We cannot sacrifice the future of our communities to patch a funding gap today.

ODOT's financial challenges must be solved, but neither of these proposals offers a solution that serves all Oregonians. They either penalize citizens with new taxes or pit one essential program against another. I urge you to reject both proposals and instead work toward a solution that finds new efficiencies and focuses on a long-term, sustainable, and equitable funding model without placing additional burdens on the people of Oregon.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Suraj Sindia