

Chair Senator Wagner, Representative Fahey, Vice Chairs, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing as a deeply concerned Oregonian to urge you to **vote NO on HB 3991**, the proposed ODOT funding package being considered in this Special Session.

This bill represents yet another attempt to raise taxes on working Oregonians while rewarding the same broken system that has repeatedly failed to deliver on its promises. At its core, HB 3991 will not only raise fuel taxes, registration fees, and title fees; it will also impose a per-mile driving tax that disproportionately harms low- and middle-income families, rural residents, and communities that rely most heavily on affordable and accessible transportation.

### **Disproportionate Impact on Communities**

- Low-income households will pay more as a percentage of their income. Gas taxes and mileage-based fees are regressive by nature. Families already forced to drive long distances for work or school will shoulder the heaviest burden.
- Rural Oregonians will be hit hardest. In many rural communities, there are no public transit alternatives. Residents must drive longer distances for basic services, medical appointments, and employment. This bill punishes them for geography they cannot change.
- **Environmental contradictions:** By penalizing electric and hybrid vehicle owners with additional fees, HB 3991 discourages the very clean-energy transition Oregon claims to support.

### **Impacts on Agriculture and Logging**

- Oregon's agriculture industry depends on trucks and equipment that must travel long distances to deliver goods from farms to markets. Every cent added to fuel, registration, and mileage costs will ripple through the food supply chain, raising grocery prices for families across the state. Farmers already struggle with slim margins, and this bill will force many to choose between cutting production or passing costs directly to consumers.
- The logging and timber industry, a cornerstone of Oregon's rural economy, will also be disproportionately impacted. Heavy equipment and log trucks burn large amounts of fuel and cover long hauls on rural roads. These industries cannot simply absorb higher taxes; the added costs will either make Oregon timber less competitive or be passed along in higher prices for construction materials—further driving up housing costs in a state already facing a housing crisis.

In both sectors, HB 3991 is not just a tax on businesses—it is a tax on every Oregonian who eats, builds, or relies on these essential industries.

### **Rising Costs Passed to All Consumers**

The cost of transportation is not borne only by drivers. When fuel taxes, registration, and per-

mile charges increase, businesses pass those costs along to consumers. This means higher prices for groceries, lumber, housing, and basic goods—further fueling Oregon’s affordability crisis. At a time when families are already struggling with skyrocketing housing, food, and utility bills, this is simply unacceptable.

### **ODOT’s Track Record of Mismanagement**

Oregonians have seen this story before. ODOT has consistently mismanaged funds, overpromised, and grossly underdelivered on projects tied to past tax increases. Current projects are already massively over budget, while executive staffing continues to expand and the actual workforce remains underfunded. Taxpayers are asked to give more and more, yet see less and less in return.

How can the Legislature, in good faith, continue to ask for more from hard-working citizens when existing resources have been so poorly managed? This is not sustainable governance. It is not responsible stewardship of public dollars.

The path forward must be reform and accountability—not more taxes. Oregon needs a full, independent audit of ODOT to provide transparency on how existing funds have been managed and spent. There must also be a freeze on new revenue streams until current commitments are fulfilled. In addition, strict directives are needed to ensure any future funding is prioritized for basic road safety and critical infrastructure maintenance—not wasted on bloated administration or megaprojects that drain resources without results. Finally, ODOT must prioritize the skilled workforce actually maintaining and repairing our roads, rather than expanding layers of executive and administrative staff.

We all want safe and reliable roads and funding to support ODOT and its workforce to provide that. But HB 3991 does not solve our problems; it deepens them. It raises taxes, increases costs across the economy, penalizes rural residents, farmers, and loggers, and undermines Oregon’s climate and equity goals.

I urge you to stand with the people of Oregon, not with a broken system, and vote **NO** on HB 3991. Instead, demand fiscal responsibility, transparency, and true reform before asking families, businesses, and communities to sacrifice even more.

Thank you for your service and for considering the voices of the people you represent.

Respectfully,

Lucas Pakes  
West Linn, Oregon

