

Submitter: Benjamin Roche

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Special Session Committee On Transportation
Funding

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3991

Public Testimony on HB 3991

Chair, Members of the Committee:

I'm here today on behalf of thousands of ordinary Oregonians who are tired of being treated like ATMs every time the state wants more money.

In 2017, this legislature passed one of the largest transportation funding packages in Oregon history. Oregonians paid more — through higher gas taxes, fees, and registration costs — because we were promised safer, smoother roads, repaired bridges, and congestion relief.

What did we actually get? Potholes, bottlenecks, and a Department of Transportation that has grown in size but not in results. Instead of accountability, we've seen mismanagement, overruns, and projects that take years longer and cost millions more than promised. The public sees it every time they drive to work: broken promises and broken pavement.

Now with HB 3991, you're back at the table asking Oregonians to dig even deeper. You call it a "funding solution." Most of us call it what it is: another tax increase layered on top of broken trust.

Here's the reality:

Oregonians already pay some of the highest transportation taxes and fees in the country.

Basic road maintenance continues to be deferred, while flashy mega-projects eat up the budget.

Audits and reports have shown inefficiencies inside ODOT, yet instead of reform, the answer is always "more money."

Before you raise one penny more from hardworking families, small businesses, and commuters, you owe us something first: accountability. Prove to the public that every dollar already collected is spent wisely. Prove that ODOT can manage its projects

without waste. Prove that road maintenance — the single most basic function taxpayers expect — will come before bureaucratic expansion or political pet projects.

Until then, I urge you to reject HB 3991. Oregonians are not asking for fancy new programs; we are asking for safe, reliable, well-maintained roads. Fix that first, and then maybe we'll talk.

Defer this to the voters or fix it and remove the tax and fee increases.