

Co-Chairs and Members of the Committee,

Before asking Oregon families for more tax or fee increases, let's be clear: ODOT is already sitting on a mountain of **\$2.5 billion in highway bond debt**. These are *Highway User Tax Revenue (HUTR) bonds*, backed by gas taxes, truck weight-mile taxes, and DMV fees. - **Source:** ODOT Annual Debt Report (Jan 2023) reports \$2.4B authorized (OTIA, JTA, HB 2017) and a 2022 portfolio hitting \$3.8B in total debt, including interest—roughly \$2.7B principal tied to HUTR bonds. ([Oregon](#))

- That number aligns with public projections and outstanding principal figures. ([Oregon](#))

By law, those debts are paid **first**. Every penny you spend on fuel is skimmed for bond payments *before* it's used to fix a pothole. Yet when ODOT faces shortfalls, they point only to “inflation” and lobby for new revenues. That isn't transparency—that's narrative control.

OTIA (2001–2005) authorized **\$2.4B in bonds** for major bridge and highway upgrades.

JTA (2009) added another **\$840M** in bonds for modernization.

HB 2017 (2017) provided **\$480M more**, plus funding for key corridor safety improvements. All of it was passed through legislation—**not** a public vote. ([Oregon](#))

So Oregonians never had a direct say in signing that multibillion-dollar debt. Yet today, families carry the bill—while ODOT celebrates ribbon cuttings and new projects, and leaves potholes on the back burner.

Legislature—here's what Oregonians deserve:

- Full transparency: Show us exactly how much of the Highway Fund is paying off old debt, how much is vanishing in administration, and what's left for actual maintenance.
- A shift in priorities: Let's fund pothole crews before thinking of new megaprojects.
- Real consent: No more bonding ahead of fundraising. If you're going to borrow, let voters know up front—not years later when they pay the bill.

We're not broke. We're burdened by the choices of the past. It's time for visibility, fairness, and real accountability.

Thank you.

One of the People of Oregon