



**Testimony to the Joint Interim Committee on Transportation Funding
re: HB 3991**

August 29, 2025

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Oregon Environmental Council**

Founded in 1968, the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership-based organization. We advance equitable, innovative, and collaborative solutions to Oregon's environmental challenges for today and future generations.

Re: Oregon Environmental Council Neutral on HB 3991

Good afternoon Co-Chairs Fahey and Wagner, Vice Chairs Drazen and Bonham, and members of the committee,

My name is Jana Gastellum, I'm the executive director of Oregon Environmental Council. First, I'd like to say thank you to this Committee for coming back to Salem, and working to address the transportation challenges facing Oregonians.

Oregon Environmental Council has been involved in transportation packages for decades. We have consistently been a committed stakeholder willing to collaborate with a wide variety of stakeholders on equitable and innovative solutions. I came down on Friday in person expecting to testify. For the reasons outlined below, we are neutral on this bill.

As a statewide organization, we have heard from large and small communities that transit and other options for the roughly 30% of people who can't drive are critical. The transit funding proposed is a stopgap, but an essential one including for medical transport for older adults. **We strongly oppose sunseting transit funding. We also oppose sweeping other funding sources, including those for walking, biking, safety or zero emission vehicles.** These, too, are essential programs for affordable, safe and clean ways to get to school, work, and the grocery store, and they are already underfunded. The Road User Charge proposal also needs to be updated. It penalizes zero emission cars rather than achieving parity.

However, your decision on this special session Band-Aid, and especially the support for transit, can help keep working class people and people on fixed incomes connected to their jobs, family and friends. It can also save the jobs held by dedicated public servants who drive our buses, fix our potholes, and keep our bridges standing.

But, this conversation needs to continue. Notably missing from this bill is dedicated action to address climate pollution. Addressing climate is a way to safeguard your investments and make wise use of public dollars. Just this week, more analysis came out showing that extreme heat shortens the lifespan of bridges.

\$100 billion

This is how much the cost of maintaining US roads will increase to a year by 2050 (in 2018 dollars), or roughly half of what state and local governments spent on roads in 2021,

according to a study that looked at the impact of climate change on road budgets if global carbon emissions keep rising until 2040.¹

According to an article that features Professor Ham, an engineering professor from the University of Texas at Arlington, *“If temperatures are out of range, bridges can get damaged unexpectedly.” Heat-swollen steel joints can impair the mobility of a swing bridge, making it unable to open or close — at least temporarily. Concrete also expands under heat. Once its expansion goes beyond a bridge’s original design limit, the concrete can crack, exposing it to moisture that can corrode internal metal components.*²

Extreme heat also makes conditions for road construction workers less safe. And today my two children have shortened school days because of extreme heat and our buildings not being resilient. By failing to address climate, we are failing our kids. We need to come back in 2026 and 2027 to pass a transportation package that meets the needs of all Oregonians: one that invests in safety and climate, is affordable, and includes ODOT accountability and transparency.

When it is time again to address the shortfalls in our transportation funding, it needs to be a holistic conversation that brings stakeholders from all different sectors for a conversation about what it will truly take to make a transformative transportation future a reality. We are committed to being at that table and centering the needs of Oregonians in a way that addresses the environmental challenges that undermines the health and well-being of our cherished state.

1

https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2025-01-30/climate-change-and-infrastructure-why-many-roads-are-under-threat?cmpid=BBDo82625_GREENDAILY&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_term=250826&utm_campaign=greendaily

² [“Are Bridges Near You Safe? This MRI-Like Scan May Prevent Disaster” Bloomberg, Aug. 26, 2025](#)