

I am in full opposition to House Bill 3992, which proposes significant increases in expenditure limitations and appropriations for several state agencies, including a staggering \$204 million boost for the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) alone. While the bill frames these changes as necessary adjustments for the biennium ending June 30, 2027, it ignores a troubling pattern of mismanagement of taxpayer funds and potential abuses of power under Governor Tina Kotek's administration. Approving this bill would only reward inefficiency and enable further waste at a time when Oregonians are already burdened by rising costs and declining services.

First and foremost, HB 3992 funnels massive sums to ODOT without addressing its chronic mismanagement issues. Recent reports highlight how ODOT has been plagued by high staff turnover, outdated financial software, cost overruns, and project delays that have eroded public trust. <https://www.opb.org/article/2025/05/23/report-oregon-department-transportation-delays-staff-turnover-cost-overruns/> The agency's financial woes stem largely from megaprojects that have exploded in cost while revenues have evaporated, crashing ODOT into what has been described as a "financial brick wall." <https://cityobservatory.org/the-oregon-department-of-transportation-crashes-into-a-financial-brick-wall/> Audits reveal that projects from the 2017 funding package are over budget and behind schedule, with less revenue than anticipated due to poor planning and inflation mismanagement. <https://www.opb.org/article/2025/02/20/think-out-loud-odot-oregon-department-of-transportation-roads-funding-budget/> In one extraordinary hearing, ODOT admitted to a more than \$1 billion budget error in its 2023-25 cycle, underscoring a failure in basic financial oversight. ( <https://www.wweek.com/news/2025/02/26/in-extraordinary-hearing-odot-explains-billion-dollar-budget-blunder/> ) Critics have pointed out that ODOT constantly fails audits and mismanages funds, including diverting resources to non-essential initiatives like \$30 million for DEI programs while claiming inability to maintain basic services such as plowing mountain passes. [https://www.reddit.com/r/oregon/comments/1luamnq/oregon\\_department\\_of\\_transportation\\_lays\\_off/](https://www.reddit.com/r/oregon/comments/1luamnq/oregon_department_of_transportation_lays_off/) and [https://x.com/jofororegon/status/1958283369550422362?s=46&t=tpqHHJw-MWiNCs\\_KnLcMxA](https://x.com/jofororegon/status/1958283369550422362?s=46&t=tpqHHJw-MWiNCs_KnLcMxA) ). Even editorial boards have called out ODOT's mismanagement, noting multiple instances where the agency has squandered resources without accountability.

<https://www.oregonlive.com/opinion/2025/04/editorial-oregons-massive-transportation-tax-plan-needs-better-guardrails.html> Granting ODOT an additional \$204 million in expenditure authority—much of it tied to fees and miscellaneous receipts that ultimately burden taxpayers—without reforms is irresponsible and will only perpetuate this cycle of waste.

Similar concerns extend to other agencies in the bill. The Oregon Department of Administrative Services (DAS), which receives a \$500,000 General Fund appropriation for a highway cost allocation study review, has been flagged in state audits for potentially wasting millions through poorly managed contracts and avoidable costs.

[https://www.reddit.com/r/oregon/comments/1lw5bqf/state\\_audit\\_oregon\\_could\\_be\\_wasting\\_millions\\_in/](https://www.reddit.com/r/oregon/comments/1lw5bqf/state_audit_oregon_could_be_wasting_millions_in/) The Secretary of State's Audits Division, slated for a nearly \$480,000 increase, has itself been embroiled in scandals, including the withdrawal of a scandal-marred cannabis audit that led to the downfall of a previous secretary amid ethical concerns. <https://oregoncapitalchronicle.com/2025/03/12/oregon-secretary-of-state-read-withdraws-scandal-marred-marijuana-audit-that-led-to-fagans-downfall/> and <https://oregoncapitalchronicle.com/2025/05/09/former->

[oregon-secretary-of-state-ordered-to-pay-3600-after-ethics-investigation/](#) These examples illustrate a broader pattern of fiscal irresponsibility across agencies that HB 3992 seeks to fund further.

Compounding these issues is Governor Kotek's own record, which raises alarms about abuse of power and misuse of public resources. Under her leadership, taxpayer funds have been allocated to provide regular state police security and new staff for First Lady Aimee Kotek Wilson, despite her holding no official elected position—a move criticized as an abuse of power that diverts resources from critical needs.

[https://x.com/mjoelarge/status/1772844540808057261?s=46&t=tpqHHJw-MWiNCs\\_KnLcMxA](https://x.com/mjoelarge/status/1772844540808057261?s=46&t=tpqHHJw-MWiNCs_KnLcMxA) Kotek has also been accused of overreach in other areas, such as signing bills that invite legal process abuse to target political opponents and mishandling agency leadership amid investigations into ethical violations and abuse backlogs at entities like the Oregon Youth Authority and the Oregon Liquor and Cannabis Commission.

<https://www.freedomfoundation.com/press-release/oregon-governor-signs-anti-freedom-foundation-bill/> and <https://bendbulletin.com/2023/02/08/kotek-alleges-abuse-of-power-by-top-olcc-management/> and

<https://oregoncapitalchronicle.com/2025/07/30/states-juvenile-justice-system-gets-new-leader-following-scrutiny-over-agency-abuse-investigations/> and

[https://www.reddit.com/r/oregon/comments/1ir9nvx/governor\\_kotek\\_places\\_oregon\\_youth\\_authority/](https://www.reddit.com/r/oregon/comments/1ir9nvx/governor_kotek_places_oregon_youth_authority/)

Public sentiment echoes this, with calls to impeach Kotek for such actions and widespread criticism of her administration's handling of power.

[https://x.com/tonyaiellojr/status/1932192569641025690?s=46&t=tpqHHJw-MWiNCs\\_KnLcMxA](https://x.com/tonyaiellojr/status/1932192569641025690?s=46&t=tpqHHJw-MWiNCs_KnLcMxA)

Expanding funding under this governance risks enabling more unchecked spending and potential abuses, especially given the bill's emergency declaration that bypasses extended review.

Oregonians deserve better stewardship of our taxes. Instead of rushing through HB 3992, the Legislature should demand audits, reforms, and accountability first. Public hearings have already seen strong opposition to this, and related transportation bills pushed by Governor Kotek, with citizens submitting testimony against the measures due to these very concerns <https://fastdemocracy.com/bill-search/or/2025S1/bills/ORB00021754/>

I urge you to **reject this bill and protect Oregon taxpayers from further mismanagement and abuse.**

Jennifer Gunter  
Wasco County