

Submitter: Les Poole

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Special Session Committee On Transportation  
Funding

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3991

In 2024 ODOT informed the Oregon Transportation Commission they were in financial trouble. ODOT didn't take action, continuing as if all was well.

Mismanagement and inflation played a part in the shortfall, but it was the loss of expected millions from the tolling scheme that hit hardest. ODOT didn't announce its fate before the Legislature convened in January. As the weeks rolled by I knew by the silence that ODOT was in big trouble. Finally, in late February ODOT officials shockingly announced there was a growing \$1.1 billion deficit.

A bill that would bail out ODOT, fund necessary services and high priority projects could have been introduced months ago for less than \$2 billion. The session was over half completed when HB-2025 was dumped on us. It was over \$14 billion!

Here we are in a Special Session after HB-2025 crashed like the Titanic. HB-3991 was introduced at \$5.6 billion, almost the identical amount of HB-2017, the legislation that was supposed to address traffic congestion and prevent the mess we are in today. It contained similar language to insure accountability.

HB-3991 has been pared down but is still top-heavy, primarily because of an excessive focus on funding transit. Transit is not practical for all, and ignoring roads to zealously fund it has been inappropriate. Representative Phan finally admitted the bill goes far beyond addressing critical needs. She stated it's about "disincentivizing driving, and making us choose public transportation".

Making us do something is not the definition of a choice.

For months a convoluted process has played out at a time when the public is weary and is watching. HB-3991 is a flawed bill that resulted from a flawed process.

Regardless of the pressure to support it, Legislators should reject it.

?