

SB 1599 -1, -2 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Joint Special Committee On Referendum Petition 2026-302

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Meeting Dates: 2/9, 2/11, 2/12

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure reschedules the date for the portions of chapter 1, Oregon Laws 2025 (House Bill 3991) that are referred by Referendum Petition 2026-302, to the primary election held on May 19, 2026. The measure establishes alternative processes and timelines for the referendum, including setting the deadline of March 12, 2026, for the Oregon Supreme Court to complete its review of the ballot title and for a joint legislative committee to prepare the explanatory statement and financial estimate to be printed in the voters' pamphlet. The measure sets out requirements for the Secretary of State (SOS) and county clerks related to the referendum and primary election and authorizes the SOS to adopt rules. The measure declares an emergency and is effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-1 The amendment removes the sections setting out the requirements for the Secretary of State (SOS) and county clerks related to the referendum and primary election and the authorization for the SOS to adopt rules.

Fiscal impact: Has minimal fiscal impact

Revenue impact: No revenue impact

-2 The amendment changes the ballot title provision to require the use of the latest ballot title certified by the Attorney General on the ballot and voters' pamphlet if the Supreme Court review process has not been completed by March 12, 2026. It also removes the sections setting out the requirements for the Secretary of State (SOS) and county clerks related to the referendum and primary election and the authorization for the SOS to adopt rules.

Fiscal impact: May have fiscal impact, but no statement yet issued

Revenue impact: No revenue impact

BACKGROUND:

During the 2025 1st Special Session, the Legislative Assembly adopted House Bill 3991, which included increases to fuel taxes, revisions to weight-mile tax tables and flat fee rates, increases to passenger vehicle registration fees and title fees, and included a requirement that plug-in electric and hybrid vehicles participate in the road usage charge program. The measure also increased the statewide employee payroll tax that provides funding for transit services throughout the state, increased the annual allotment from the Oregon Department of Transportation to the Travel Information Council for maintenance and operation of roadside rest areas, repealed the toll program established by House Bill 2017 (2017), and treated diesel fuel as a motor fuel rather than a use fuel.

On November 10, 2025, a referendum was filed with the Secretary of State (SOS) to refer parts of HB 3991, including the fuel taxes, passenger vehicle registration fees and title fees, and transit payroll tax. On December 30, 2025, the SOS completed signature verification and determined that Referendum 2026-302 had qualified to the ballot for the November 3, 2026, General Election.

Ballot Title

Under ORS 250.035, the ballot title of any state initiative or referred measure must contain a subject matter caption of not more than 15 words; "simple and understandable" statements of not more than 25 words each

describing the result if the measure is approved and if it is rejected; and a “concise and impartial statement” of not more than 125 words summarizing the measure and its major effect.

The Secretary of State received a [certified ballot title from the Attorney General](#) on February 6, 2026. Any registered voter who submitted written comments on the draft ballot title and is dissatisfied with that ballot title may petition the Oregon Supreme Court by February 23, 2026, for review.

Explanatory Statement

An explanatory statement is an “impartial, simple, and understandable” statement explaining the measure that cannot exceed 500 words (ORS 251.215). It is printed in the voters’ pamphlet.

Financial Estimate

Under ORS 250.125, a financial estimate for a state measure is printed on the ballot and in the voters’ pamphlet and describes:

- the amount of direct expenditure, direct reduction of expenditure, direct reduction in state revenues, direct tax revenue or indebtedness, and interest that will be required to meet the provisions of the measure if it is enacted; and
- the aggregate amount of direct expenditure, direct reduction of expenditure, direct reduction in revenues, direct tax revenue or indebtedness and interest that will be required by any city, county or district to meet the provisions of the measure if it is enacted.