

Submitter: Brian Accuardi
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Special Committee On Referendum Petition
2026-302
Measure, Appointment or
Topic: SB1599

Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Brian Accuardi, and I am an Oregon resident writing in strong opposition to SB 1599.

This bill would move the voter referendum on transportation reform from the November general election to the May primary election. That change may sound technical, but it is not. It is a fundamentally political decision that reduces voter participation and undermines the clear intent of the people who signed the referendum petition.

When Oregonians signed the petition to refer this issue to the ballot, they did so with the understanding that it would appear on the November ballot—when the largest number of voters participate. If supporters of the underlying policy wanted the vote to occur in May, they could have written the referendum that way from the beginning. They did not.

Moving the election date after the fact changes the rules in the middle of the game. Primary elections consistently have lower turnout than general elections. Fewer young people vote. Fewer working families vote. Fewer everyday Oregonians participate. Shifting this vote to May is not about efficiency or good governance—it is about trying to influence the outcome by limiting who shows up.

That is not how democracy should work.

A statewide policy with major financial impacts on transportation funding, taxes, and long-term planning deserves to be decided in the election with the highest possible public participation. November elections exist for that reason. The Legislature should be encouraging more voices in the process, not fewer.

Supporters of SB 1599 have offered no compelling administrative reason to make this change. Ballot measures are routinely placed on November ballots without issue. Nothing about this referendum is so urgent or unique that it cannot wait for the normal general election cycle. The only practical effect of this bill is to lower turnout and tilt the playing field.

Oregonians are paying attention. When citizens use the referendum process, it is

because they want a full, fair, statewide conversation. Moving the vote date after petitions have already been gathered sends the message that the Legislature does not trust voters to decide in a high-participation election.

Please respect the intent of the referendum process and the voters who used it. Reject this political maneuver and keep the vote where it belongs—on the November ballot.

I urge you to vote NO on SB 1599.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Brian Accuardi