

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

Chair and Members of the Committee,

?I am writing in strong support of SB 1599. Moving the transportation referendum to the May primary is a necessary step to protect Oregon's infrastructure and fiscal sovereignty.

?The opposition has claimed that a May election "skirt[s] accountability," but in Oregon, every registered voter (including over 1.1 million non-affiliated citizens) receives a ballot in the mail for the primary. To suggest that a May vote is "low turnout" or "shady" is an indictment of our own democratic process. If the 163,451 citizens whose signatures were verified truly represent a mandate, then those voters will be just as capable of casting a ballot in May as they would in November.

?Furthermore, we must address the contradiction in the caucus's demand for "accountability." By referring HB 3991, the opposition successfully froze the very law that mandated independent performance audits and quarterly reporting for ODOT. It is difficult to take calls for transparency seriously when the same leaders are actively delaying the legal mechanisms designed to provide it.

?Delaying this vote until November is a direct violation of the spirit of the 10th Amendment. By intentionally creating a \$242 million budget hole for an extra six months, the opposition is surrendering our state's self-reliance. This delay risks the safety of 422 bridges and threatens the livelihoods of hundreds of road maintenance workers. Instead of protecting Oregon's right to manage its own affairs, these leaders seem more interested in "measuring the curtains" for a federal administration in DC, inviting federal intervention by sabotaging our own ability to function.

?Finally, while the opposition lectures this body on "shady politics," they remain silent on proven ethics violations within their own ranks. In December 2025, the Oregon Government Ethics Commission found that a senior member of their caucus repeatedly violated state law for personal financial gain, yet he remains in a position of influence.

?Oregonians deserve a transportation system that works and a leadership that values ethics over campaign optics. We cannot afford to let our infrastructure rot as a backdrop for a November election. I urge you to pass SB 1599 and let the voters settle this matter in May.

Thank you.