

Submitter: Amber Smith

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Special Committee On Referendum Petition
2026-302

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1599

Oppose SB 1599 – Respect Oregon Voters and the Referendum Process

Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Amber Smith, and I am an Oregon voter. I am writing to express my opposition to SB 1599.

Last fall, hundreds of thousands of Oregonians participated in a lawful referendum process to place the Legislature's transportation tax and fee increases on the November 2026 ballot. That effort followed the rules set out in Oregon law and reflected a clear desire by voters to have a broad, statewide discussion on an issue that directly affects household budgets and daily life.

SB 1599 would change the election date after the fact, moving the referendum from the November general election—when voter participation is highest—to a May election with significantly lower turnout. Regardless of how one feels about the underlying policy, shifting the timing of a voter-initiated referendum undermines confidence in the fairness of our democratic process.

The referendum power exists so Oregonians can weigh in directly on major decisions, especially those involving taxes and fees. That process only works when the rules are stable and applied consistently. Changing the election date once citizens have already gathered signatures sends the message that voter participation is welcome only when it is convenient.

Oregon's leaders frequently speak about increasing civic engagement and respecting the voices of everyday residents. Preserving the November election for this referendum would align with those values and ensure the widest possible participation.

I respectfully urge you to vote NO on SB 1599 and allow this decision to remain with Oregon voters in November 2026, as intended.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Amber Smith
Oregon Voter