

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

As a voter, I signed the petition to call a referendum against the Gas tax increase despite overwhelming opposition to the legislation when the legislature was in special session. The petition called for the referendum to go before the voters during the November election. The entire process of addressing ODOT funding stinks of political gamesmanship by the Democratic supermajority and the Governor. During the regular long session, the ODOT tax increase failed at the end of session because there wasn't the support. When the Governor called a special session, and Senator Chris Gorsek's stroke caused him to miss the session, the Governor didn't have enough votes and had to keep the session open for nearly two weeks at taxpayer expense because, without Senator Gorsek's vote, there weren't enough votes to pass the tax hike despite the supermajority. Once passed by the supermajority, the Governor sat on the "emergency funding" bill for 39 days to limit the time the Citizens of Oregon could organize to send to referendum this very unpopular tax increase bill.

The voters overwhelmingly demanded the referendum be sent to the voters on the November 2026 ballot. To move or change that date would be nothing other than the supermajority attempting to silence the demands by the voters of Oregon who have already spoken. Moving it to the May ballot during the primaries under the guise of we need to figure out the funding for ODOT is a false claim. At present, the Governor, Legislature and ODOT have had to live within the funding constraints of the status quo, and moving this vote to May would not bring any other certainty to the funding picture for ODOT.

The voters demanded by referendum to have their vote on the November ballot. Anything else is just a political game to give advantage to a political party and should not be permitted.

Mark Sauer