

I am submitting this testimony in strong opposition to SB 1599.

I believe deeply in the public's right to participate in decisions that directly impact our communities and our financial well-being. The referendum process exists to ensure transparency, accountability, and broad civic engagement—values that should never be weakened for the sake of political convenience.

Moving this referendum from the November general election to a May election, when voter turnout is historically lower, undermines the very spirit of representative government. Decisions about statewide tax and fee increases deserve the highest level of public participation possible. November elections provide that opportunity; shifting the vote risks excluding thousands of Oregonians from having their voices heard.

Regardless of where one stands on the underlying transportation taxes and fees, the process must remain fair and accessible. Changing the election timing after citizens have already exercised their constitutional right to place this measure on the ballot creates the appearance that the rules can be altered when the outcome is uncertain. That erodes public trust—something our state can ill afford.

I urge lawmakers to respect the referendum process and the will of the people who followed it in good faith. Protect voter access, uphold transparency, and allow this measure to appear on the November ballot where participation will be strongest.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask you to vote NO on SB 1599.