

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee;

My name is Kim Young, and I serve as a city councilor and also as a signature collector working directly with voters across our communities. I am writing in strong opposition to Senate Bill 1599.

SB 1599 would move the statewide vote on the transportation measure referred by petition to the May 2026 primary election. While this may appear administrative, the practical effect is to interfere with the referendum process and the rights reserved to the people under the Oregon Constitution.

Oregonians have a long and proud tradition of direct democracy. The referendum process is not a courtesy extended by the Legislature; it is a constitutional right belonging to the people. Any action that appears designed to alter timelines, change election dates, or otherwise affect the conditions under which a referred measure is voted on raises serious concerns about fairness and transparency.

It is also important to note that the official referendum signature sheets clearly stated that if enough valid signatures were gathered, the measure would be placed on the November ballot. That is the understanding voters had when they signed. Changing the election date after signatures have been collected undermines that representation and erodes trust in the process.

As someone who has spent time in the field collecting signatures, I can attest that this process is not easy. It requires coordination, resources, and significant public engagement. When the Legislature changes the election calendar or procedures after the fact, it creates confusion for voters, undermines public confidence, and can effectively penalize citizens who followed the rules in good faith.

Opposition testimony has highlighted several key concerns:

- Changing election timing mid-process risks appearing as an attempt to influence turnout or outcomes.
- It sets a troubling precedent for legislative interference with the people's referendum rights.
- It creates confusion for voters and volunteers who rely on predictable, established election schedules.
- It undermines trust in the initiative and referendum system that has been a cornerstone of Oregon governance for over a century.

Regardless of one's position on the underlying transportation measure, the process itself must remain fair, neutral, and consistent. The Legislature should not be seen as moving the goalposts after citizens have exercised their constitutional rights.

As a local elected official, I believe strongly in respecting the will of the voters and protecting the integrity of our democratic systems. As a signature collector, I have seen firsthand the time, effort, and civic commitment it takes for everyday Oregonians to use the referendum process. SB 1599 sends the wrong message to those citizens.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to vote NO on SB 1599 and protect the people's constitutional right to referendum.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kim Young". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kim Young
City Council President, City of Sherwood