

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

Written Testimony in Opposition to Senate Bill 1599

Submitted to: Joint Special Committee on Referendum Petition 2026-302

Date: February 8, 2026

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Michael Dunn, a resident of Gold Beach, Oregon, and a registered voter and tax payer. I strongly oppose Senate Bill 1599, which would move Referendum Petition 2026-302 from the November 2026 general election to the May 19, 2026 primary.

This referendum challenges significant transportation tax and fee increases enacted in the 2025 special session. Oregonians gathered sufficient signatures to place it on the November ballot, exercising their constitutional right to referendum.

SB 1599 should be rejected because:

1. **November elections have much higher turnout.** (often 20–40% more voters than May primaries). Moving the vote would disenfranchise many Oregonians, especially those who vote only in general elections.

2. **It undermines the referendum process.** Changing the date after certification interferes with citizen-led democracy and sets a troubling precedent.

3. **No compelling reason exists** for the change. There is no administrative urgency; November allows ample time for preparation, education, and debate.

4. **Rural communities like Curry County would be harmed.** Primary turnout is lower here due to access and logistical challenges, disproportionately silencing coastal and rural voices already facing high transportation costs.

SB 1599 prioritizes expediency over inclusive democracy and voter access. I respectfully urge the Committee to reject the bill and keep Referendum Petition 2026-302 on the November 2026 ballot.

Thank you for your consideration. I recommend a **DO NOT PASS** vote on SB 1599.

Sincerely,
Michael Dunn
Gold Beach, OR 97444