

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

To the Joint Special Committee on Referendum Petition 2026-302,

I oppose this bill placing the matter on the ballot. For nearly a year, the Governor and a legislative supermajority have characterized this policy as an emergency, citing an urgent funding shortfall that would jeopardize road maintenance and public safety. The subsequent legislative and executive actions, however, have been inconsistent with that claim.

The bill was introduced late in the prior session, moved forward despite acknowledged deficiencies, and required extraordinary procedural steps to pass. During this period, ODOT laid off frontline workers while retaining administrative staff, ostensibly to preserve cash flow. Despite repeated assertions of urgency, the Governor delayed reconvening the legislature, did not remain present for the final vote of the first legislation and never appeared or sent a representative in the emergency session, and then did not promptly sign the bill once it passed—further compressing the public's referendum timeline. These actions undermine the assertion that this measure constituted a true emergency.

The vote itself produced notable consequences, including a party switch by one legislator and the resignation of another who publicly stated that the process was failing to serve the public. The egregiousness of the bill for an emergency being unsigned for an extended period, drawing criticism from members of the Governor's own party and further limiting the statutory petition window, seems at best to be unprofessional and at worst it reflects poorly on the democratic trifecta of the last 40 years and the growing supermajority party of the state. Though it is an act of one person, it is the Executive leader of the state itself.

Moreover, claims of a funding crisis conflict with prior ODOT testimony and with the existence of taxpayer refunds under the state's kicker law, which by definition indicates surplus revenues. If the situation were as dire as described, these fiscal realities would appear incompatible.

In short, the record reflects a regular and consistent contradictory messaging and actions:

- The state claims a funding emergency yet returning excess revenues to taxpayers and offering money from said department for projects in the millions.
- Public safety is cited as justification, yet timelines and staffing decisions do not

reflect the urgency.

- Working families are the emphasized branding of the party, yet policies increase taxes and fees on the same group

- Not to mention the smoke and mirrors on the BBB so the state can keep taxing tips, and overtime seems super contradictory of the same party name.

Given these inconsistencies, I believe voters should be permitted a fair and full opportunity to review and decide this matter as defined by the referendum process. If the Governor is serious of how dire the straits are, as she and her party have had a year to tell us how bad it is, we should treat it as such and let the voters vote on it in the November vote, which is as soon as possible. The fact that the majority shows up to this vote should further reassure the Governor and the state that they have their constituents in mind and encourages Democracy in our Constitutional Republic.

Respectfully submitted.