

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

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on HB 1599. Nearly 18% of voters in my county signed the No Gas Tax petition with the understanding that it would be on the November ballot. Moving it to May is a purely cynical political play to avoid accountability. Democrats should be ashamed. Oregonians are not fooled.

Please reflect on whether this process has remotely been anything like “protecting Democracy.”

- Dems try to rush a \$4.3T Transportation spending pkg through in the last weeks 2024 session. They fail.
- \*\*Republicans had a plan that would cover ODOT funding gap by reallocating existing funds.\*\*
- Gov Kotek calls a Special Session over LABOR DAY to try again.
- Democrats don't have the votes due to Democrat absences for health reasons.
- Democrats drag out the Special Session days and days longer waiting for the votes to appear.
- Oregonians submit thousands of written testimonies- 95% in opposition.
- Democrats finally have the votes when they manage to drag in a deathly-ill cancer patient to vote. She died weeks later. Bill passes.
- Republicans Rep.Ed Diehl and Sen. Bruce Starr work to launch a referendum effort, which can only begin gathering signatures after the bill is signed. 71,000 signatures have to be gathered by Dec. 30.
- Gov. Kotek delays signing the bill until the nearly the last possible day in order to make it as difficult as possible for the No Gas Tax referendum effort to get those 71,000 votes.
- No Gas Tax referendum effort explodes across the state. There's only about 45 days to gather 71,000 signatures.
- Gov. Kotek immediately starts threatening ODOT layoffs and says roads won't be plowed in order to scare people away from signing.
- Amazingly, over 250,000 Oregonians signed the referendum to put elements of HB 3991 on the NOVEMBER ballot.
- BUT Dems are desperate to NOT be held accountable, so they do NOT want it on the GE ballot to ruin Governor Kotek's reelection and their own chances of maintaining a super majority.