

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

With our roads suffering from lack of maintenance, and transit agencies forced to cut service, the Oregon Legislature made a last-ditch effort to provide a minimal level of funding through HB 3991 of the 2025 Special Session. This compromise was undermined when the very legislators who participated in the deal decided to selectively refer parts of the law to voters, which automatically cancelled much of the sought-after revenue. In other words, a self-selected group of Oregonians halted the revenue that our elected representatives, through negotiation and compromise, had managed to scrape together to keep our highways safe and buses running.

By moving this question to the May primary, we can end the uncertainty about how all voters feel -- restoring the funding if the majority wants it, or looking at alternatives if the funding is rejected, instead of sitting on our hands until November. The Oregon Constitution anticipates this sort of situation, and explicitly allows the legislature to specify the date for a referral election. If petition signers were misled about this, they should complain somewhere else. The petition sponsors are involved in public affairs, and certainly knew this. I strongly support moving the election to the May primary, and hope voters mark "yes" on their ballots to restore needed funding ASAP.