

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

My name is Matthew Brewer, and I'm a resident of Sherwood, Oregon. I'm writing today to strongly oppose SB 1599.

Over 250,000 Oregonians, including me, took the time to sign Referendum Petition 2026-302. We did so knowing full well that our signatures were referring parts of Chapter 1, Oregon Laws 2025 (special session)—including those fuel tax increases, higher vehicle fees, and wage taxes for transit—to the November 3, 2026 general election. That was the clear promise on the petition we signed. It wasn't a suggestion; it was the deal we all agreed to when we put pen to paper.

Now, SB 1599 wants to move that vote to the May 19, 2026 primary instead. Let's be real: primaries here in Oregon see way lower turnout than November generals. That's not an accident—it's a pattern. Shifting this to a lower-turnout election feels like a deliberate attempt to dilute the voice of everyday Oregonians who drive our roads, pay our gas taxes, and just want a fair shot at weighing in on big tax hikes during a high-participation election.

This move comes across as pure political maneuvering, driven by fear that the measure might not fare well when more people are paying attention and voting alongside the governor's race. If the goal is to "fix" transportation funding quickly, why not trust the people who gathered those signatures in record time? Why change the rules after the fact?

Oregon's referendum process is one of our strongest tools for direct democracy. We shouldn't undermine it by moving goalposts once the people have spoken with their signatures. Respect the process, respect the voters, and keep this on the November ballot where it belongs.

Thank you for your time and for considering my opposition to SB 1599.

Sincerely,

Matthew Brewer
Sherwood, Oregon