

Submitter: Macey Wessels
On Behalf Of: Macey Wessels Farms
Committee: Joint Special Committee On Referendum Petition
2026-302
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1599

Chair and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. I am writing today to oppose Senate Bill 1599, which would move the statewide vote on Referendum Petition 2026 302 from the general election to the May 19, 2026, primary election.

I believe Oregonians deserve the broadest possible participation as intended while collecting signatures by voting on Petition 2026-302 in the November general election, which consistently draw far higher turnout than primary elections. Moving a major statewide policy question to the May primary means fewer voters, especially non affiliated voters, and those who do not regularly take part in primary contests will have the opportunity to weigh in. A referendum is, by definition, a question the people have demanded to vote on. It should be scheduled at the time when most Oregonians vote.

The public petition process quickly signaled that voters want their say, not a rushed timeline. Referendum Petition 2026 302 qualified because thousands of Oregonians quickly believed this issue called for full statewide vote. SB?1599 undermines that public-driven process by placing the vote in a lower turnout election with a compressed timeline for all to properly respond. This creates less time for the public to study the measure, understand its financial and policy implications, groups to create ballot statements, and take part meaningfully in the discussion. Rushed elections help no one.

General elections are the traditional and proper venue for issues of this scale. This measure concerns statewide transportation law. This is major, long-term policy affecting the entire livelihood of all Oregonians at home and in their businesses. I am particularly worried about the impact the current transportation fees will have on my farm, and my farm's ability to operate in this state. For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to oppose SB 1599 and keep the vote on Referendum Petition 2026 302 on the November 2026 general election ballot.

Thank you for your consideration. Respectfully,

Macey Wessels
Macey Wessels Farms
Scio, Oregon