

Submitter: Tyler Ross

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Special Committee On Referendum Petition
2026-302

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1599

SB 1599 undermines the integrity of Oregon's referendum process by moving a citizen-initiated vote on the repeal of the Governor and Legislature's \$4.3 billion gas tax and fee package from the November general election to the May primary election. More than 250,000 Oregonians signed the referendum petition with the clear expectation that this vote would occur during the general election, when voter participation is highest.

Shifting this vote to May—combined with the creation of a special joint committee to fast-track the bill—appears to be procedural gamesmanship designed to limit public participation. Historically lower voter turnout in May primaries risks disenfranchising voters and distorting the outcome of a matter of statewide importance. In addition, the compressed timeline makes it significantly more difficult for citizens to meet requirements to submit arguments for the Voters' Pamphlet, further silencing public voices.

Oregonians deserve a fair, transparent process that respects the will of voters—not one that changes the rules midstream to favor those in power.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the House to reject SB 1599.