

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

I respectfully oppose Senate Bill 1599, which would move Oregon's transportation tax referendum — including a significant gas tax increase — from the November general election to the May primary. SB 1599 is not simply a scheduling change: it accelerates a controversial and costly tax increase without giving Oregonians adequate time or the broadest possible voter participation to weigh in.

Oregonians already face some of the highest gas taxes in the nation, and many households struggle to afford basic necessities. Recent transportation legislation proposes billions in new taxes and fees, including higher fuel taxes and DMV costs, at a time when inflation and the rising cost of living are squeezing families' budgets. Moving up the vote risks denying citizens — especially part-time workers, low-income families, and those with inflexible work schedules — the greatest opportunity to participate in a decision that will directly affect their ability to pay for fuel, commute to work, and keep food on the table.

Further, past analysis shows that Oregon's transportation tax revenues have not always been spent efficiently, with concerns about project prioritization and budget management. Forcing an expedited vote on a tax package that many constituents oppose will only deepen frustration and undermine confidence in state fiscal stewardship.

For these reasons — the high existing tax burden, inefficient use of transportation funds, and the negative impact on struggling Oregonians — I urge the committee to oppose SB 1599.