



HB 2522 & HB 2538: New funding priorities for emergency supplies and community gardens and food banks?

Testimony for House Revenue – Jody Wisner – 2.7.2019

Tax Fairness Oregon opposes HB 2522 and HB 2538. Both of these bills provide income tax credits for doing good things. HB2522 creates an income tax credit for taxpayers that purchase emergency preparedness supplies and HB 2538 does the same for tax payers that invest in community gardens and food banks.

Tax Fairness Oregon is not opposed to helping these good community investments. It is a case of using tax credits to avoid the normal budget balancing process that grants for the same purposes have to pass through.

If you as legislators believe that helping citizens prepare for emergencies with supplies is something that should be done, then it would be more straight forward to simply have the state purchase those supplies in bulk and hand them out to citizens. If you want more public support of community gardens you should provide competitive grants to do that. If you believe giving a tax credit is justifiable then you have to believe that handing out the equivalent value in supplies or grants is worthwhile. If you don't, then you should not vote for these bills.

The use of tax credits has been abused and become a method of avoiding the tradeoffs inherent in expenditures from the General Fund. Furthermore, tax credits are rarely used by our lowest income earners or those who are not particularly knowledgeable about tax credits, but are well used by higher income, more aware taxpayers. This ensures that we are helping the wrong citizens.

Let's stop using tax credits as a way to avoid prioritizing General Fund expenditures.

We read the bills and follow the money