

Sarah Deumling
Zena Forest LLC
4550 Oak Grove Rd.
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April 1, 2019
House Rules Committee
Oregon State Capitol
900 State St.
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Opposition to HB 2974

Chair Holvey and Committee Members

I am finding it difficult to provide useful testimony to this proposed bill which, though it causes me much concern, is so general and open ended that it leaves me with more questions than specific points which I can address. We are family forestland owners in the Eola Hills with Hwy 22 W. south of us and Zena Rd. immediately to the north. We make our living entirely from the 1300 acre forest (have for more than 30 years) and a small hardwood mill on site - selling flooring, as well as cabinet and furniture grade lumber to Willamette Valley markets. We employ 3 - 4 local folks at living wages as well as numerous local contract workers in the woods. We use the existing bridges for both personal and business purposes.

We as a family and business do not feel it is wise to build more automobile infrastructure through rural Polk County. Development is squeezing us in many ways already and if we want to encourage our agriculture and forest industries, which are the bedrock of the Polk County economy, we must be very careful about adding additional development pressure.

We certainly don't want to have our property taxes increased for something we don't want. We do use the roads and bridges and absolutely appreciate the costly public maintenance of that infrastructure. We also are very careful to drive as little as possible and to choose times of day that do not contribute to congestion. If new taxes should be imposed for roads and bridges the the users should pay through a gas tax or through tolls but NOT increased property taxes.

My questions - are increases to our property taxes allowed in the proposed "Bridge District"? What about Oregon Measures 5 and 50? Is a 2/3 majority vote of the legislature necessary to raise taxes in this case? If not, why not? Who would decide where a new bridge would be built? Would there be public input? What would the decision process look like.

Finally I'd like to take this opportunity to say that if we are going to increase our taxes it would be wise to invest in our small local communities to make them the kind of "have-everything- you-need" livable communities they were once upon a time instead of building transportation infrastructure to help others fly through our counties to somewhere else. Then local folks wouldn't have to drive to Salem nearly so often and the bridges wouldn't be so congested.

Sincerely,
Sarah Deumling