

6 February 2022

Senator Lee Beyer, Co-Chair
Representative Susan McLain, Co-Chair
Joint Committee On Transportation
Oregon State Legislature

Dear Senator Beyer, Representative McLain, and Members of the Joint Committee:

I write as a physician, Oregonian, small business leader, and proud owner of at least a modicum of common sense and reason to urge you to pass HB 4151.

Like many Oregonians who have ever lived, worked, or spent time in any other state or country, I have long seen tremendous folly in the pretense that Oregonians are not smart enough to safely pump their own gasoline. But I have recognized that once in place (1951), this practice has tremendous inertia to remove, since any legislator would have to deal with strawman arguments about safety and jobs.

I suggest to you that now is our moment! Not only are the consequences of our folly greater now that we have tremendous labor shortages that make delays waiting for an attendant vastly longer, the impact of getting rid of these unnecessary and artificially created jobs has gone away. There are more unskilled jobs to be had than people to fill them. This will not make anyone unemployed.

<https://www.oregonlive.com/business/2022/01/oregon-has-more-open-jobs-than-unemployed-people-exacerbating-hiring-squeeze.html>

No one will suffer for lack of a gas attendant job. We can finally make a common sense move to end this silly practice and improve the lives of all Oregonians.

1.) This is not about safety.

48 states and every other country on Earth besides South Africa permit self-service fueling. If there was a safety concern in 1951 (only in Oregon and New Jersey, not anywhere else?), the past 71 years of improved technology (automatic shut-off, vapor collection barriers, etc) and 71 years of greater familiarity with how to operate a gas pump have made this moot.

2.) Moreover, if it was about safety, why should the legislature have a double standard for urban Oregonians and rural Oregonians?

As you know, low-population counties have had self-service gas at night since 2015 and all day since 2017. I am sure no legislator thinks rural Oregonians matter less.

- 3.) Oregonians would not pay for this if given a choice. In a counterfactual scenario where mandatory full-service didn't exist, there would be no support for a proposal to introduce it and a hidden gas tax (in labor costs) to pay for it. Especially not when it creates significant delays.
- 4.) The pandemic and related labor shortages have dramatically highlighted how wasteful this practice is. Many of you will have had the experiences I have, in which gas stations run only one lane – not for lack of gasoline, but for lack of attendants! On several occasions, there are no attendants at all and the station was closed during normal business hours.

Make no mistake, this proves that the mandatory full-service practice is in fact a second kind of tax! It is a tax on the most precious resource every Oregonian has, even more precious than money – our time.

Since hearing of this bill, I have started a timer every time I have gotten gasoline in Oregon:

- 24 minutes
- 27 minutes
- infinite minutes (gas station closed at noon due to zero attendants)
- 34 minutes
- 17 minutes
- 21 minutes
- infinite minutes (gas station closed at 8am due to zero attendants)
- 19 minutes
- infinite minutes (gas station closed at 3:30 pm due to zero attendants)

When I get gas in Vancouver, I pump my own gas and am in and out in under 10 minutes every time.

It is time for Oregon to get rid of the arbitrary bottlenecking of the process of fueling our cars, taxing gasoline to pay for unneeded jobs, and taxing the time of every Oregonian.

Oregonians are not stupid, they can handle it.

This is a small but tangible and important change that would make the lives of all Oregonians better.

Yours truly,



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