

Submitter: Lindsay Berschauer
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure: HJR201

Chair Fahey, Vice-Chairs Helfrich & Kropf, Members of the Committee,

My name is Lindsay Berschauer and I serve as the Chair of the Yamhill County Board of Commissioners. This testimony is my own, and does not represent the entirety of the Yamhill County Board.

There are some in government who forget that a "fee" is a TAX. Clever wording does not change the detrimental impact that this proposal will have on Oregonians, who already pay some of the highest tax rates in the nation.

While I will always support a public vote of approval, the mere consideration of sending this to the voters shows how out-of-touch majority-party legislators are with the economic condition our shared constituents are facing. I'm sure I'm not alone in hearing the cries for assistance when PGE jacked their rates up last month by 17% in response to renewable energy mandates that many of you passed in 2016 and are responsible for. I recall the promises made to Oregonians: "this renewable energy mandate will only increase rates by 1%". Instead, legislators allowed public utility companies to pass expenses on to consumers and now we see the results.

A new statewide property fee/tax to fund "public safety" will result in the same failed promises of the past. The money will go into a black hole with no oversight, transparency or effectiveness. Oregonians have witnessed failed policies and destructive results for too long and yet you keep using the same playbook. Create the problem-Cause public outcry-Demand more money to fix the problem. We are all experiencing the impacts of failed M110 policies and Oregonians are already paying for it. Hundreds of millions of dollars were promised to help addicts and it took almost 3 years for you to release funds and only .01% of the estimated 382,000 addicts in Oregon were helped. An abysmal result. We don't need more empty promises of boosting public safety.

A statewide property tax is the last thing Oregonians need. Yamhill County prides itself on being a "do no harm" county, meaning we seek to eliminate additional levels of burdensome bureaucracy wherever possible. Our tax rate hasn't increased in over 25 years, which forces us to be resilient, efficient and accountable. I wish the State operated under the same principles.

Vote NO on HJR 201.

Thank you,
Lindsay Berschauer
Yamhill County Commissioner