

Submitter: Richard Meis  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3362  
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March 4, 2025

To: Joint Committee on Transportation.  
Re: HB 3362 - Imposes an excise tax on retail sales of tires.

Dear Co-chairs Senator Gorsek, Representative McClain and members of the Committee

My name is Rick Meis and I live in Halfway. I write today in support of HB 3362. I want to thank Senator Gorsek and Representative Helm for sponsoring this proposal that will address several important issues.

First, I am a strong supporter of passenger rail service, especially Amtrak. My first train trip was longer ago than most of us want to remember, when most of the railroad companies ran passenger trains around the country. Anything we can do to promote and enhance passenger rail service, as this bill will do, is a step forward in supporting ever-increasingly needed public transportation that is accessible to most everyone.

Second, as a youth, I was a member of the Ranger Rick Club, the children's part of the National Wildlife Federation. Growing up in the rural west, I was instilled with a strong conservation ethic towards the land and wildlife. The impact of human activity on wildlife has increased staggeringly, and this bill would promote steps to reduce this problem through its creation of the Wildlife-Vehicle Collision Reduction Fund.

In the 90's, I volunteered with a conservation organization to ground-truth and promote a major wildlife corridor. Busy roads are the major impediment to biologically necessary migration corridors for our iconic wildlife species. Highways, from two-lane state roads to our Interstate system, have a disappointingly significant impact on wildlife. This fund could help with this problem. The ED of the group I worked with at that time just now retired from the Western Transportation Institute where he was the lead in developing a Road Ecology Program. Some of his work was with wildlife overpasses on major highways, something areas of Oregon could significantly benefit from having in place.

Third, anything we can do to deal with vehicle tire waste is important work. Used tires are a real problem. They are expensive to get rid of ... the proper and legal way ... and thus they become a Large Litter problem everywhere. Practically everywhere one goes, you see used tires thrown aside. Our economic system has disincentivized sound reuse, recycling and disposal of this waste item.

Back in Montana, I worked on some stuff with a gentleman who took it upon himself to try to do something about it. He set up a facility on the back of his business property to build those nice tire door mats. Good ones. While he fronted the investment to set the facility up, we are so enamored with cheap imports that his project could not even pay for the basic labor to built high quality mats. A fund like this bill establishes could look at reuse options to help to prevent pollution of tire waste in the first place.

Yup, the cost of an excise tax on retail sales of tires will be described as burdensome to consumers. For a very few, yes, it will be a burden, but for most, not at all. In reality it is chump change when you look at how much money people very willingly dump into their cars and trucks. I might even suggest that this bill be expanded to add the tax to custom wheels as well. Many folks don't hesitate to dump a thousand bucks or more into fancy, new rims.

To sum up, I wholeheartedly support HB 3362. I urge members of this committee to look positively on the benefits this bill offers, and put your support behind it.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

/sn/ Richard R. (Rick) Meis