

Submitter: Patrick Kopke-Hales
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation Reinvestment
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2025
To whom it may concern:

While the intent of this bill may be to address budgetary shortfalls, it does so by imposing additional financial burdens on the very people least capable of bearing them. Increasing taxes and fees in a fragile economic environment disproportionately harms low-income individuals, fixed-income seniors, and working-class families—communities already facing compounding struggles in housing, healthcare access, and educational opportunity.

Oregon's economy is already faltering. The state's GDP growth rate currently sits at approximately 0.9%, significantly lagging behind the national average of 3.2% (Oregon Economic Forecast, May 2025). According to IBISWorld data, Oregon ranks below the national median in five-year GDP growth, confirming the state's weak economic momentum. This environment is pushing employers and workers alike to relocate; Common Sense Institute data shows Oregon had a net out-migration of – 29,370 people in 2023, reversing years of prior growth, and net business creation has steadily declined.

Additionally, high taxation exacerbates income inequality. According to the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy (ITEP), the lowest 20% of Oregonians pay 10.1% to 12% of their income in state and local taxes—a higher share than the wealthiest 1%, who pay between 8.1% and 10.4%. This tax structure is not merely unfair—it is structurally regressive and compounds the economic marginalization of Oregon's most vulnerable residents.

In times of economic uncertainty, higher taxation doesn't stimulate recovery—it suppresses it. It reduces consumption, discourages investment, and undermines financial stability for those already living paycheck to paycheck. Oregon cannot afford policies that prioritize revenue over recovery, especially when fiscal mismanagement—not insufficient taxation—is often the deeper issue.

If this legislature is serious about solving long-term structural problems, it must focus on controlling spending, implementing transparent oversight, and auditing wasteful or redundant programs. Redirect existing funds toward programs that deliver measurable, local benefit—such as rural job training, public safety, and critical infrastructure—before asking struggling Oregonians to contribute more.

Raising taxes now will not solve our problems. It will deepen them, and those who

are marginalized the most will be the hardest ones hit.

Respectfully,
Patrick Kopke-Hales, PWS/F
Gubernatorial Candidate
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