

A Shared Benefit Deserves Shared Responsibility in Transportation Funding

My name is John Marshall and I live in Coburg Oregon. I am a member of Coburg Planning Commission and have served numerous ad hoc committees for the city regarding transportation infrastructure and funding needs. I also serve on the Lane County Transportation Advisory Committee, the Lane Advisory Committee on Transportation and, on the MPC for the Eugene, Springfield and Coburg area.

I would like to voice my concern about the Oregon House Bill 2025

When it comes to funding for our transportation infrastructure here in Oregon, the burden has primarily depended fallen on drivers through the gas tax. For decades, this system made sense: those who used the roads most contributed the most to their preservation and maintenance. But in today's world, that model is no longer sustainable — or entirely fair.

The reality is that all of us, whether we drive daily or not at all, benefit, either directly or indirectly, on a functioning transportation network. Our roads, bridges, and public transit systems support commerce, public safety, healthcare access, and everyday services. Delivery trucks, public buses, emergency vehicles, and even school transportation depend on well-maintained infrastructure. A person who never drives still benefits from roadways every time they receive a package, rely on first responders, or access goods and services made possible by regional mobility.

While the need for a robust transportation systems continues to grow, gas tax revenues are in decline. Fuel-efficient vehicles, higher use of public transit and, the rise of electric cars — all positive developments — have reduced the amount of fuel consumed, thereby shrinking the tax base. Meanwhile, inflation and construction costs have outpaced the per-gallon tax rates, has further eroded the funds available for preservation and maintenance of our existing infrastructure not only for the State but also for our Counties and local Cities.

This gap in funding has presented an opportunity to rethink how to pay for our infrastructure — and to acknowledge that it is a shared public good. Just as we fund schools, emergency services, and water systems through broad-based taxes, we should consider transportation as a critical public investment deserving of similar support. Relying solely on

gas taxes is increasingly out of step with modern transportation patterns and fails to reflect the broad benefits that roads and transit provide.

Moving forward, I believe a more balanced funding model is essential unlike Oregon House Bill 2025. This could include directing a portion of general tax revenue to transportation preservation and maintenance projects, implementing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) fees, or modest user fees for services that disproportionately impact infrastructure wear. Importantly, these efforts should be guided by principles of equity, sustainability, and fiscal responsibility.

Strong transportation systems are not just about mobility — they're about economic resilience, community safety, and quality of life. It is time we fund them in a way that reflects their true value to us all.