

Submitter: Macey Wessels

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation Reinvestment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2025

Chairs Senator Gorsek, Representative McLain, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Macey Wessels, and I am writing to you to oppose HB2025. This bill could be devastating to our farmers and their ability to produce some of the highest quality crops for the world. Our farm grows grass seed, mint, hazelnuts, and we bale grass straw for export. All of these commodities help grow our Oregon economy. I have significant concerns about HB2025 and its impacts to family farms throughout the state.

Oregon's farmers and ranchers already contribute significantly to our state's road and highway systems. Through fuel taxes, vehicle registrations, and equipment permits, we're doing our part. In fact, farm-plated trucks already meet their highway cost responsibilities through motor fuel taxes. Adding weight-mile assessments on top of that is not only unnecessary, it's unfair.

This bill proposes a 235% increase in the farm endorsement fee, jumping from \$26 to \$87. While I understand that fees sometimes need to be adjusted, this increase is excessive and out of proportion. It places an undue burden on those of us who are already navigating rising costs in every aspect of our operations.

HB2025 represents an estimated \$1 billion per year in new taxes and fees. That's a heavy hit for Oregon households and small businesses (including family farms like mine), especially during a time of inflation, market instability, and increasing production costs. For farmers like me, every dollar counts. We're already facing unprecedented regulatory pressures and unpredictable markets. Now is not the time to add more financial strain.

Any fees we pay should directly benefit those who pay them, and fuel and energy taxes should be collected at the final point of distribution—not layered throughout the supply chain where they become hidden and inefficient. Farmers should not be taxed for mass transit systems we don't use, and off-road fuel uses must remain exempt. Likewise, alternative fuel vehicles should contribute their fair share to road maintenance, just like conventional vehicles.

The bill also proposes increased penalties for misuse of dyed diesel, yet we haven't seen clear evidence of widespread noncompliance. Before adding more enforcement and penalties, we need transparency and data.

Agriculture depends on a safe, reliable rural road system to move crops, livestock, feed, and equipment. Transportation policy must prioritize the needs of rural communities and EFU zones across the entire state—not just urban congestion relief. Titling and registration fees should reflect administrative costs only, not serve as a general revenue stream.

Many of the proposed taxes and fees unfairly target rural communities without proper analysis or representation. Payroll taxes, in particular, should not be used to fund transportation projects. They make Oregon's agricultural employers less competitive in national and global markets.

In closing, I urge you to reconsider HB2025. It threatens the economic viability of farms and ranches across our state. We're proud to share Oregon crops around the world, but we need policies that support—not hinder—our ability to do so.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Macey Wessels
Macey Wessels Farms