

Submitter:

Joni Zimmerman

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Joint Committee On Transportation Reinvestment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2025

I support a 2025 transportation package that works for ALL Oregonians and reflects our shared values of safety, affordability, equity, and climate resilience. In particular, I urge you to fully fund greatly expanded public transportation, ESPECIALLY IN RURAL AREAS.

I don't want my tax dollars spent on anything that makes it easier for people to continue to use cars. Having so many cars is not sustainable for the environment or the liveability of our communities. Cars and roads greatly decrease our quality of life. Think of dining outside in a restaurant on a street that has been closed off to traffic and allowed to flourish as a town square vs trying to dine on a sidewalk with noisy, smelly cars and trucks going by.

I oppose new taxes that make it more expensive for people to use cars UNTIL THERE IS A VIABLE ALTERNATIVE. Existing taxes should be more equitable based on our options. For as long as I can remember, the Oregon Legislature has refused to use gas tax to fund public transportation, but you're going to have to get over that. You should have started in the 1950's. Since you didn't, you have a lot of catch up to do. People are already struggling to pay for cars and fuel to get to work because there isn't public transportation and they are forced to own a car, often having to choose the car over food, clothing, and shelter. You can't penalize them for driving when you haven't provided another option. Sure, people who live in Portland should have to pay a high tax if they use a car because Portland has pretty decent public transportation. But those of us who live in most rural parts of the state don't have a choice. AND WE WANT A CHOICE. I don't want to drive to doctor appointments or shopping. I have a housemate who can't work because they don't drive and have been unable to find a job within walking distance. Moving is not a choice because they don't have a job so they can't pay the expenses of moving. Definitely a vicious circle.

So, I think you could charge per mile tax and the other taxes you are proposing on people whose addresses show that they do have a choice, but not on those who don't. It's nice that you are planning to expand the west sider train or whatever it's called that goes from Beaverton to Wilsonville, but what about the rest of us? We have no way to access it.

Stop spending any money on new or expanded roads. None. Only repair things like bridges that could cause death and injury if they were to fail. Let the rest of the roads deteriorate to encourage people to get out of their cars, and to drive slower in the

meantime.

Meanwhile, invest in safe bike and pedestrian paths and trails, and reliable, efficient, comprehensive public transportation.

You must understand that many people don't drive, and many people who do only do so because there is no choice. My husband no longer drives, and I don't know what we'll do when I can no longer drive. We won't be able to go grocery shopping or visit friends. My cousin lives on a completely inadequate income from disability. She can drive, but can't afford to own a car. So she depends on me and one friend to drive her places. She greatly limits her social life because she is hesitant to ask for rides. This is just wrong. If it was safe, she could get by with an e-bike or something, but Newberg streets aren't safe for pedestrians or bikes. Sidewalks are in disrepair, bike lanes (where there are any) are too narrow and not isolated from the road, and speed limits are way too high as well as unenforced. Scary. I'm an old lady. I've paid gas tax my whole life. I want to be able to walk a block from my home and catch a bus that will take me either where I need to go locally, or to a transit center that connects me with a train, bus or trolley that will take me anywhere in the country, like people in civilized countries are able to do.

So, basically, I support some aspects of this bill, but I think you could do a whole lot better for the people of Oregon.