

Submitter: Beth Daniels

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation Reinvestment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2025

No to 1B in new taxes!

ODOT's budget is up 100% since 2015. Potholes are growing like weeds and our bridges and highways are crumbling due to lack of proactive maintenance

CPI up 35% – ODOT's spending increase is nearly 3x that rate

Steel is up 73%

Concrete is up 65%

Asphalt up is 25%

Again, hard expenses are "only" up 25-73%, yet ODOT's spending is up nearly 100%, the system is crumbling, and staff is apparently being cut – the math doesn't work for me. HB 2025 rewards this math by sending over a billion dollars in new taxes to ODOT.

And beyond the annual budget, where did the unexpected \$3.7B of 2021's post-COVID Build Back Better federal infrastructure funds go? Roads are worse and infrastructure is crumbling due to lack of maintenance since 2015.

We need to take a hard look at the fundamentals our government funds. I don't disagree that roads need to be maintained or repaired. I just have issue with how we are getting there. Have you taken a hard look at the overall budget? Has consolidating duplicative government agencies been considered? Are we spending too much money on our homeless problem -- based on the number of homeless there actually are (ie per capita) and could some of that money be used for our road maintenance? There are millions and millions of dollars going there with no end in sight as they just aren't being effective.

This state has the highest population it has ever had and as a result is bringing in the most money it ever has through property and other taxes. So it doesn't add up that we are experiencing shortfalls in funding -- rather it feels like a mismanagement of all the money we have. I'd like to see a thorough vetting of our state budget on all fronts and any waste or duplication eliminated and that clearly communicated to the public before proposing more taxes. That goes for every state agency including ODOT. The easy route is just to add more to the budget and, in turn, raise taxes. Do the hard work and you'll likely be able to fund this and other programs without increasing taxes. And you'll get more buy-in from the public as they see you do that work.

And if you are wondering, I'm a registered Democrat!