

Submitter: Macey Wessels

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation Reinvestment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2025

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

My name is Macey Wessels, and I am writing to you to oppose HB2025 and the recently posted -28 amendment. I'm here today to express deep concern about House Bill 2025 and the impact it will have on those of us who rely on Oregon's roads and highways not just for business—but for survival. 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, and we bale grass straw for export. All these commodities help grow our Oregon economy. I have significant concerns about the HB2025-28 amendment and its potential impact on 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 12-cent increase in both gas and diesel taxes starting in 2026. Then in 2028, we will be paying higher diesel rates plus an increased weight-mile tax. Our farm relies on diesel-powered equipment and trucks; this is a double blow that will drive up the cost of doing business and food production. There is no alternative fuel for our tractors, so we will be stuck paying these fees.

This bill includes dozens of fee increases, many of them over 100%. 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. These are not just fees, they are market barriers.

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. 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 and 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. Perhaps most troubling is the redirection of Highway Trust Fund dollars to non-highway uses. Using them elsewhere undermines the very purpose of the fund and leaves our rural infrastructure to crumble.

In addition, it is extremely concerning the lack of transparency and inclusion as lawmakers drafted this amendment. This package was developed behind closed doors. As a payer into the transportation system, I was never invited to the table. Neither were many others who will bear the brunt of these changes. That's not how good policy is made. We deserve a voice in decisions that affect our livelihoods.

In closing, I urge you to reconsider HB2025 and its -28 amendment. 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