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MARION COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

June 26, 2025

Co-Chair Senator Khanh Pham
Co-Chair Representative Susan McLain
Co-Vice Chair Senator Bruce Starr
Co-Vice Chair Representative Shelly Boshart Davis
Member Joint Committee on Transportation Reinvestment

RE: Opposition to HB 2025

Co-Chair Senator Pham, Co-Chair Representative McLain, Co-Vice Chairs, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on House Bill 2025, the Transportation Reinvestment and Innovation Package. As a Commissioner for Marion County, the state's top agricultural-producing county, I must express my strong opposition to this bill as currently written.

While we agree that Oregon's transportation infrastructure needs sustained investment, the scale and speed of this proposal are deeply concerning. With only a few days remaining in the legislative session, a public hearing on a bill of this magnitude, containing nearly 20 new taxes and fees totaling \$11.7 billion, simply does not allow enough time for the public, small businesses, or local governments to provide meaningful input. Oregonians deserve a deliberate and transparent process, not one rushed through at the eleventh hour.

The latest amendment increases the gas tax by 12 cents per gallon starting January 1, 2026, bringing Oregon's total to 52 cents, one of the highest rates in the nation. At the same time, the bill moves toward a mandatory road usage charge, effectively taxing Oregonians twice for the same miles driven. The option to pay a flat fee does not resolve the inequity, it only repackages it. This is particularly unfair to rural residents and agricultural operators, who must travel long distances and rely heavily on fuel to grow and transport the food that feeds Oregon families.

The tax increases don't stop at the pump. Vehicle privilege and use taxes would increase by 350%, and payroll taxes would nearly triple by 2030. These costs will be passed down through every link of the supply chain, raising prices on essential goods and services. For low-income families, seniors, and working-class Oregonians, this isn't just a budgeting issue, it's a threat to their ability to afford food, transportation, and basic needs.

Marion County residents are already concerned with the lack of follow-through on transportation projects promised under previous packages. There are still critical infrastructure improvements

waiting for completion. How can we justify adding layers of new taxes before we've delivered on prior commitments?

Further, HB 2025 gives broad new authority to the Oregon Department of Transportation to establish taxes, fees, and enforcement mechanisms through administrative rulemaking. This is taxation without direct accountability. Tax decisions should remain with elected officials who are answerable to the public, not delegated to agencies.

I do want to thank the Legislature for maintaining the current 50-30-20 revenue-sharing framework with counties and cities. Marion County is responsible for over 1,100 miles of roads and 141 bridges. Local jurisdictions are where the rubber meets the road, and maintaining this partnership is critical.

But this package, as it stands, places an unreasonable burden on the very people who keep Oregon running: farmers, rural residents, and working families. I urge you to pause, reevaluate, and build a better, more equitable path forward, one that honors public input, balances economic impact, and keeps Oregon moving without pushing Oregonians over the edge.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Danielle Bethell', written over a horizontal line.

Danielle Bethell
Chair