



**Testimony to the Joint Special Committee On Referendum Petition 2026-302
re: SB 1599**

February 11, 2026

**Kristopher Fortin Grijalva, Transportation Program Director
Oregon Environmental Council**

Founded in 1968, the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership-based organization. We advance equitable, innovative, and collaborative solutions to Oregon's environmental challenges for today and future generations.

Re: Oregon Environmental Council support for SB 1599

Dear Co-chairs Jama and Gombert, and members of the committee,

On behalf of our thousands of members statewide, OEC supports SB 1599.

This bill respects the will of Oregon voters by moving the referendum election to May, allowing people to have their voices heard as quickly as possible on how we fund transportation and strengthening our democratic process. With future transportation funding uncertain and federal cuts looming, lawmakers are taking a balanced approach. Moving up the election ensures the Legislature can respond quickly and responsibly with a long-term solution that reflects the values of Oregonians. This is an issue that cannot wait, Oregonians deserve real solutions now and we urge your support for SB 1599.

As a statewide organization, we have heard from large and small communities that transit and other options for the roughly 30% of people who can't drive are critical. Investing in public transit, sidewalks, bike lanes, trails, and crosswalks reduces traffic crashes and injuries and keeps Oregonians safe no matter how they travel. Transportation is Oregon's largest source of climate pollution, and expanding access to transit, active transportation, and clean vehicles will cut emissions, improve public health, and strengthen communities.

Oregon Environmental Council has been involved in transportation packages for decades. We have consistently been a committed stakeholder willing to collaborate with a wide variety of stakeholders on equitable and innovative solutions. OEC, along with 50+ communities in the statewide Move Oregon Forward coalition, worked hard in the 2025 long session and special session to support a transportation package that reflects Oregon's values of safety, climate responsibility, affordability, and accountability. Once the results of the referendum are in we can begin the conversation of how we can ensure the next transportation reflects the values of Oregonians.

Sincerely,

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