

HB-1599

I oppose HB-1599. Following the defeat of Governor Kotek's \$4.9Billion Gas Tax, with Referendum-302 Oregon's voters spoke and HB-1599 **MUST** be voted on in the November Election' This ensures that the measure will be decided by the total electorate during the general election cycle, adhering to established procedures for referendum outcomes.

The expedited timelines and emergency clause, which allow the act to take effect immediately upon passage, will limit adequate public review and debate. By overriding existing statutes regarding deadlines and content (such as ORS 251.026, 251.285, and 254.085), the bill may be seen as circumventing established legislative procedures designed to ensure thorough vetting and fairness in the electoral process. We argue that these provisions undermine established checks and balances and reduce opportunities for public engagement and oversight.

An opposition analysis of this bill focuses on several potential areas of concern.

First, the bill centralizes significant authority with the Secretary of State, granting the office discretion over deadlines, content, and procedures related to the voters' pamphlet and the conduct of the election for the measure described in section 1. This centralization may limit transparency and public input, as the Secretary can determine what information is included and may bypass standard competitive bidding practices for pamphlet preparation. Additionally, the bill restricts the voters' pamphlet to include only the measure described in section 1, potentially reducing voters' access to information about other measures and limiting the scope of public discourse during the election cycle.

The expedited timelines and emergency clause, which allow the act to take effect immediately upon passage, could be criticized for limiting adequate public review and debate. By overriding existing statutes regarding deadlines and content (such as ORS 251.026, 251.285, and 254.085), the bill may be seen as circumventing established legislative procedures designed to ensure thorough vetting and fairness in the electoral process. Opponents may argue that these provisions undermine established checks and balances and reduce opportunities for public engagement and oversight.

[3]