

To the Honorable Members of the Oregon State Legislature,

RE: Strong Opposition to Senate Bill 1599 – Preserving the November General Election Referendum Date

I am writing as a concerned constituent to express my unequivocal opposition to Senate Bill 1599. This proposed legislation, which seeks to move the referendum vote on the recently passed transportation taxes (HB 3991) from the November General Election to the May Primary Election, is a cynical maneuver that undermines the democratic process and dishonors the collective will of Oregonians.

The people of Oregon, through a successful and massive signature-gathering campaign, exercised their constitutional right to refer these new taxes—including the increase to the gas tax, vehicle registration fees, and the payroll tax for transit—to the voters for a final decision. By qualifying for the ballot, the petitioners and the thousands of citizens who signed the petition earned the right for this critical issue to be decided at the time of maximum voter participation: the General Election in November.

My opposition is rooted in the following points:

- **Undermining Democratic Norms:** Moving this critical vote to the May primary is a clear attempt to decrease voter turnout and minimize public debate on an unpopular tax measure. This action suggests a legislative intent to circumvent a fair and robust democratic process.
- **Breaking a Promise to the People:** The successful referendum campaign was conducted with the understanding that the vote would take place in November, as is standard practice for referred measures. SB 1599 breaks faith with the thousands of Oregonians who took action to place this on the general election ballot.
- **Ensuring Maximum Participation:** The November General Election consistently sees the highest voter turnout. Crucial issues, particularly those with such a

significant economic impact on families and businesses, must be decided when the greatest number of citizens can have their voice heard.

I urge you to reject Senate Bill 1599 and allow the referendum on the transportation taxes to remain on the November General Election ballot, as guaranteed by the successful petition effort. The legislature should respect the democratic choice of the people and not attempt to silence or suppress their vote through procedural tactics.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my strong opposition to this bill.

Sincerely,

Whitney Kelso