

Hello,

I am writing to submit my comments on the House Bill 2017 transportation funding package.

There are several aspects I am disappointed and dismayed to see:

I am shocked how much money is being wasted on massive highway expansion projects. Multiple studies have shown that adding highway lanes does not reduce congestion. This is due to "Induced Demand", which basically means that adding more lanes simply entices more people to use the highway and commute times are not reduced at all. Not only is widening freeways a huge waste of taxpayer money, it will increase our greenhouse gas emissions and exacerbate climate change as well as worsen air quality. Please do not fund highway expansions!

Instead of funding highway expansions, much more money should be dedicated to public transit (including light rail!), bicycling, and walking. Investments in these transport modes will reap much more ROI by lessening health care costs in the community, improving air quality, and reducing traffic congestion. When fewer people drive, less money needs to be spent on road maintenance. Public transit, bicycling, and walking should receive a much larger share of dedicated funding!

I also feel that a bicycle tax is a poor use of resources and puts undue burden on bicycle shops. I can understand that the \$500 minimum price has been included to protect low income people, but it hurts local bike shops while exempting large box stores who sell almost exclusively bikes that are less than \$500. Furthermore, the 26" wheel provision complicates things and will not necessarily work as intended. There are many kids bikes that have 26" wheels and there are also many different types of adult bikes that have wheels smaller than 26". Although I applaud the fact that revenue raised from a bicycle tax would go exclusively to bicycle and pedestrian projects, the amount that would be available after collection and administration fees is extremely small and not very relevant.

I do not support the mandatory use of road salt. It contaminates streams, river and watersheds as well as puts more wear and tear on vehicles. Here in Bend we get considerably more snow than Portland and the city does not use salt at all and people are able to get around just fine. Please do not require the use of an unnecessary environmentally destructive substance on our roads.

There are also several other items in the bill that I am glad to see included:

I fully support an increase of the gas tax. It is laughable how little Oregonians pay for gasoline and it is past time to increase the tax to help pay for maintaining our existing infrastructure. I encourage you to raise the gas tax by more than what is specified in the current bill.

I also support a surcharge on new cars. People should be required to pay for the privilege of driving a car and the wear and tear they cause on the roads. However, I do not agree with the fact that the surcharge is higher for electric cars than gas guzzling cars. Electric and fuel efficient cars should be encouraged in order to reduce our dependence on oil and reduce our emissions.

The dealer privilege tax is also a good provision that I am in favor of. However, I do not think there should be an upper limit (\$3750) to the tax. There is no upper limit to the bicycle tax and I think it is wrong that someone would buy a \$20000 car would pay less tax than someone who buys a \$6000 bicycle.

I fully support tolling and congestion pricing on highways. People should be charged to use them and add to congestion and pollution.

I also support the transfer of Powell Boulevard from ODOT jurisdiction to PBOT. It is an urban city street that should be managed by the city not a state highway agency.

Thank you for your consideration,

Ross Winsor