



**David Gomberg, State Representative, House District 10**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 5, 2015

Contact: Kyle Linhares, Chief of Staff  
rep.davidgomberg@state.or.us 541-921-2038

**Rep. Gomberg Explains “Yes” Vote on SB 324**

Greetings Neighbors and Friends,

In a record-shattering five-and-a-half hour debate, the Oregon House has passed SB 324 –the Clean Fuels Bill. The debate was the best I have seen in the Oregon House.

This measure will extend Oregon’s low-carbon standard fuel standard through 2025. It seeks to make Oregon a leader in reducing carbon emissions by setting an increasing cleaner standard for fuel distributors. But there are concerns that it might also increase gasoline costs. Others argue that competition will drive prices down and help wean us from oil dependency. Since the bill has passed the house, it now goes to Governor Brown for her signature.

Many of you have written me about SB 324. Please know that I struggled long and hard with this measure.

It is my great privilege to represent a remarkable part of our beautiful state. Our district includes transportation-dependent small businesses, seniors on fixed incomes, and many minimum wage working families. We already have the most expensive gasoline in the state. So anything that may tend to increase gas prices could have a devastating effect on the lives of my friends and neighbors.

But the people of my district also have an abiding love for the things that make Oregon special. They want clean air. They want clean water. And they want a clean, resilient future for their children and grandchildren.

This puts me in the unenviable position of having a large and vocal constituency who believe this program is bad policy. I also have a large and vocal constituency who think this is good public policy. I have listened to both sides. I understand and respect them. I have struggled to find a path that well serves our district.

I began the process as a “no” vote because I found the cost arguments compelling. Our best research suggests Clean Fuels will increase gas costs between four and 20 cents over the next ten years. And as I said earlier, price increases will hurt.

The Senate amended the bill to exempt commercial vehicles, water craft, and fishing vessels. That would help our coastal and coastal-range industries. They also added consumer protections, which are important to seniors and other consumers. So there were improvements, but the bill still had the problem of increasing costs.

Then something happened. The bill passed the Senate and came to the House where it spent 10 days in committee hearings before a full vote. And during those ten days, gasoline prices increased 70 cents per gallon.

The shock of this latest rapid price increase puts the question of cost increases in awkward context. Suddenly, an increase of twenty cents over the next ten years was no longer a compelling argument for me. When problems with oil refineries in California or OPEC production decisions in Saudi Arabia—factors we have no control over in Oregon—increase our fuel costs this dramatically, it is clear we need to diversify to protect ourselves from wild market fluctuations. This, along with the added amendments to protect commercial and fishing vessels, pushed me to a “yes” vote.

The sad fact is that we currently have no control over the cost of gasoline. Our best alternative is to facilitate innovation, encourage alternatives, and work with this bill, which is designed to help create Oregon-based clean fuel businesses and employ more Oregonians.

Studies suggest that introducing competition from cleaner fuels will encourage innovation and exert downward pressure on gasoline prices. Diversifying the fuel supply will both decrease demand for oil and gives consumers more transportation fuel choices. If we can put our state's best minds to work on research, development, management and marketing, we can put thousands of Oregonians to work on our clean energy future. We can take some of the \$6 billion a year we send out of state to the oil industry and reinvest those dollars to produce homegrown fuels from safe and cleaner sources.

The final House vote was 31-29, for passage. I voted “Yes.” It passed the Senate 17-13 with the support of our Senator, Arnie Roblan. I have no argument with those who opposed the bill. It was a difficult choice and a hard vote to take. I want to extend my thanks to all of my constituents who wrote to me or called my office to share their views and concerns with me. And, while I know I couldn't make everyone happy with my vote, I trust that there are more issues that we will be able to work on together in the coming months.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to serve the people of House District 10. If I can be of any assistance in the future, please do not hesitate to be in contact with me.

Warm regards,

Rep. David Gomberg

###