



# OREGON SENATE REPUBLICANS OREGON HOUSE REPUBLICANS PRESS RELEASE

---

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Date:** January 7, 2026

**Senate Contact:** Ashley Kuenzi | [Ashley.Kuenzi@oregonlegislature.gov](mailto:Ashley.Kuenzi@oregonlegislature.gov)

**House Contact:** Emily Girsch | [Emily.Girsch@oregonlegislature.gov](mailto:Emily.Girsch@oregonlegislature.gov)

## **Governor Kotek Admits Failure, Begs Legislature to Repeal Her Signature Transportation Tax Package**

**SALEM, Ore. – Governor Tina Kotek** today asked the legislature to repeal **House Bill 3991**, her signature transportation tax package passed during the 2025 special session, effectively admitting what Oregon Republicans and hundreds of thousands of taxpayers have said from the start: the bill was rushed, deeply flawed, and broadly opposed.

HB 3991 is currently frozen following a successful citizen referendum that qualified for the November 2026 ballot. Rather than allowing voters to have their say, the Governor is now urging lawmakers to fully repeal the bill, a move Republicans say is driven by political necessity, not good governance.

“Governor Kotek is not repealing this bill because she suddenly discovered it was bad policy,” said **Senate Republican Leader Bruce Starr (R-Dundee)**. “She is doing it because Oregonians stood up, made their voices heard, and forced her to make a political decision to save face.”

**Representative Ed Diehl (R-Stayton)**, one of the chief petitioners on the successful referendum, said the Governor’s decision undermines the voices of voters who demanded accountability.

“Hundreds of thousands of Oregonians signed petitions because they opposed this tax hike and wanted a vote,” **Diehl** said. “Repealing the entire bill instead of only the provisions referred to voters is about political leverage. Keeping this deeply unpopular tax package off the same ballot as the Governor is no coincidence.”

**House Republican Leader Lucetta Elmer (R-McMinnville)** said a full repeal goes far beyond what voters referred and unnecessarily wipes out bipartisan improvements that were never in dispute.

“A full repeal doesn’t just undo the tax increases Oregonians objected to. It also repeals provisions the referendum didn’t touch,” **Elmer** said. “That includes removing tolling language from the 2017 transportation package, fixing long-standing weight-mile parity issues for trucking, and adding accountability measures Republicans fought for. Throwing out those reforms along with the tax hike is not about good policy. It is about political leverage and keeping Democrats in control of the next negotiation.”

Lawmakers question the Governor's calls for a "bipartisan process."

"You can talk about bipartisanship all you want, but actions matter. Governor Kotek's track record is one of acting in bad faith with Republicans and going back on her word," **Diehl** added. "Simply having a Republican in the room doesn't make a bill bipartisan if it has no impact on the final outcome. The proof will be in the pudding. We will be watching the Governor's actions very closely."

Senate and House Republicans are committed to engage in upcoming discussions with the same position they have held throughout 2025: there is enough money in the system, and it must be better prioritized before taxpayers are asked to pay more.

###