



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
900 COURT ST NE
SALEM, OR 97301

June 18, 2019

Re: Vote Explanation, House Bill 2020B

Chief Clerk Sekerak,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide the following vote explanation for the record.

After lengthy and careful consideration of House Bill 2020B, I was a “no” vote today. I am left with a conflicted heart and feel compelled to explain.

Before I explain my position, I want to sincerely commend the good and honorable Representative Karin Power for her thoughtful and tireless work on this bill.

Global climate change is real. Future generations are looking to elected officials at the local, state, and federal levels of their government to do something, but I fear that if we do this now, and we do it wrong, the repercussions will be felt by all Oregonians. If Oregon’s economy is damaged, and we can’t afford to maintain our roads, we will be an example of why not to tackle climate issues with state policy. As much as I believe we have to do something, I even more strongly believe that we have to get it right. Unfortunately, I didn’t believe that HB 2020B, in its current form, got it right enough for me to vote yes.

My beliefs about House Bill 2020B are nuanced but my underlying values are unwavering, and my background demonstrates those values.

As a member of the Energy Trust Board, I represented rural communities for eight years ensuring that the public purpose charge that is the cornerstone of the energy trust revenue was equally distributed across the state and working toward investment in efficiency, conservation and renewable power projects in urban and rural communities. It was an honor to serve.

During that same time, the City of Coos Bay built the first LEED certified public building on the coast, a new Fire Station. There were many doubters in the beginning in my community, including my husband who at the time was a City Councilor. With a great deal of education about the benefits of sustainability from the Energy Trust Staff, a lot of encouragement and cajoling, that building is now a source of pride in the community.

As a Port Commissioner I traveled to three countries supporting a deep water, offshore wind project because I knew that some of the best wind on the planet lies a few miles offshore between Coos Bay and San Francisco. This was verified by the department of energy at the federal level, who was involved in the project as well. The



project would have brought *gigawatts* of renewable power into Oregon. We failed at the first attempt, but we will one day tap that resource.

On the subject of coastal renewable energy opportunities, I often joke about having a bone to pick with my friend from the House District to the north of mine, Representative Gomberg. My district also fought for the wave energy testing facility that now lies off the coast of House District 10 in Newport.

I personally have 5.8 kw of solar power generation on my home. This is because I know and believe in the importance of the transition to solar and wind and geothermal and hydro and wave -- all sources of renewal power are critical to our future.

In the 2017 Transportation package, which I played a large part in crafting as the Co-Chair of the Joint Committee on Transportation, we looked toward the future of not only Oregon's transportation infrastructure but the future of transportation fuels themselves. We made significant investments in transit, we tiered registration and title fees to differentiate between vehicles that are highly and efficient and those that are not. We incentivized, if in a small way, Oregonians to purchase electric vehicles with the goal of driving down emissions.

This is all to say that I am not a climate denier. In fact, I am deeply concerned about how to make the changes we will have to make as a state and as a society to combat climate change. However, I have two problems with House Bill 2020B.

The Speaker trusted me with a gavel as the Co-Chair of the Joint Transportation Committee. I thank her for that honor. It is a responsibility that I take very seriously. I consider myself a steward of Oregon's transportation system and have spent much of this session following the interplay between House Bill 2020B and the 2017 Transportation Package; especially issues pertaining to the Highway Trust Fund, how we preserve, maintain and improve our entire transportation system. It leaves me deeply concerned.

How do we keep our promise to improve the transportation system through the 8 years of gas tax increases and 10 years of implementation under HB 2017 when the Trust Fund will now be losing money? Some estimates are up to \$18.5 billion in revenue over a 30-year period. It is unclear how we mitigate that loss.

How can the cost increases to motorists and freight movers not have a significant negative impact on the economy of the state as these costs will trickle down to every Oregonian?

How do we meet and maintain cost responsibility, our constitutional charge, in a changing system and move toward road usage fees, which must be part of our path forward as we electrify? What are the possible constraints on the state's ability to bond beyond the planned projects called out in HB 2017 as we move forward?

There are also unresolved, constitutional questions regarding the HTF, and the Common School Fund.

In the 2017 Transportation Package, we raised the gas tax 10 cents, and Oregonians trusted us to do that knowing we weren't going to hit them again for 10 years. That was our pledge. It's a pledge I can't, with a good conscience, break.

Most importantly, how do we actually lower emissions in the transportation sector when there is no clear path to electrification infrastructure or fleet conversion on a large enough scale to be on target to meet the stated 2035 and 2050 goals?

I see many unresolved transportation issues in HB 2020B. Telling our constituents to trust us and that we'll fix it later is not very comforting, I fear.

We have been in a recession on the south coast for 40 years now. We have not recovered the way that much of the rest of Oregon has; a case in point, the closure of the Georgia Pacific mill just down the road from my house. This is personal for me. It is why I run for this office: to protect my communities who have been struggling for quite some time. I fear for my constituents who struggle, and I fear for my businesses who struggle.

House District 9 is far away from any urban centers. This means that my constituents drive more. They will have higher costs as fuel prices increase with few transportation alternatives. Businesses in my district have increased costs well. It costs more to move goods to or from the south coast.

We have done good and important work in the past several legislative sessions: a minimum wage increase, paid sick leave, pay equity, the Transportation Package, the Student Success Act, and the potential for a paid family leave bill later this session. However, all of these are cost drivers. I fear we are in danger of hitting critical mass for our constituents and for our businesses, particularly in poor and rural communities. We have accomplished a great deal, but for rural coastal Oregonians and the businesses on our coast how much is too much?

I honestly don't know how I can go home and look my 65,000 constituents in the eye, individuals and business owners alike, and tell them "It's going to be okay. Yes, your fuel prices are going to go up again, your home heating and natural gas costs are going to go up, and the costs of your goods and services are going to go up." How do I tell them that it's going to be okay, when I don't believe it myself? At what point does this burden become too great to bear for my rural constituents?

I believe that climate change must be responded to, but 2020B is not a plan of action that generates climate improvements significant enough to justify the price that rural businesses and low-income Oregonians will be asked to bear. Ultimately, I don't believe that it is a plan of action that improves the lives of the rural constituents in places like House District 9, and so I voted no.

Respectfully,



Caddy McKeown
State Representative
House District 9