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OFFICE OF STATE REPRESENTATIVE ANNA SCHARF

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Representative Scharf Requests Special Session

Representative Anna Scharf (House District 23, R-Amity) joined Senator Brian Boquist (Senate District 12, R-Dallas) in formally requesting a one-day Special Legislative Session to rebalance the weight mile tax.

Article IX 3a of the Oregon Constitution requires the State Highway Fund to be fair and equitable to light and heavy users alike to ensure that cars and trucks pay their fair share of the usage of the road. Cars pay the gas tax, while diesel trucks pay their portion through the weight mile tax.

The biennial Highway Cost Allocation Study (HCAS) is used to understand the cost responsibility of each class of vehicle. The 2021-2023 report showed that heavy vehicles were overpaying by 16%, while the 2023-25 report showed heavy vehicles were overpaying by 31%. During the 2023 session, the Majority party knew of this imbalance and refused to address it and have no plans to address it in the upcoming 35-day session in 2024. This constitutional violation must be addressed in a Special Session.

Based on the 2023-2025 HCAS, the Department of Transportation has estimated that trucks will overpay by approximately \$193 million per year. That is over \$500,000 in taxes being collected **every day** in violation of the State Constitution. While the weight mile tax is paid by trucks, the cost is passed onto Oregonians as increased prices on goods and services they use every day. The real people overpaying are the working class, seniors on fixed incomes, and families.

“Without trucks, families and communities in Oregon would not have access to the products they rely on. Yet, the State is knowingly overtaxing them in violation of the constitution,” **Rep. Scharf (R-Amity)** said about her effort to call a Special Session. “It is more expensive to operate a truck in Oregon than any other state in the nation. We simply cannot force trucking companies and independent truckers to shoulder the burden of Oregon’s transportation taxes and continue to knowingly violate Oregon’s Constitution. A one-day special session can remedy this situation now.”

Under Article IV Section 10a of the Oregon Constitution, a member from each chamber may submit a formal request for a Special Session. Representative Scharf and Senator Boquist submitted this formal request on Friday, December 15. Each member of the Legislature will be sent a ballot, where a majority of both chambers would have to vote in favor of the Special Session for it to take place. Ballots are slated to go out to members the week of December 18th and will be due back within 14 days. The estimated date that a Special Session could take place would be the week of January 8th, which coincides with pre-planned Legislative Days, a week in which lawmakers are already planning to be in Salem to prepare for the February Short 35-day Legislative Session.