

Senator Alan Olsen

Senator Chuck Thomsen

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Senate Democrats Refuse To Send Hidden Gas Tax Measure to Oregon Voters

Salem, OR - Today, a motion to refer the hidden gas tax found in Senate Bill 324, known as the Low Carbon Fuels Mandate, failed on a party-line vote in the Oregon Senate. The minority report, carried by Senator Alan Olsen (R-Canby) and Senator Chuck Thomsen (R-Hood River) would have allowed Oregon voters to have the final say on a hidden gas tax that could raise fuel prices by as much as \$1.00 per gallon.

"I am disappointed that my colleagues across the aisle refused to give Oregon voters a chance to vote on this Carbon Mandate that results in a hidden gas tax on working Oregon families and small businesses," said Senator Chuck Thomsen. "This 'hidden tax' disproportionately harms low income and rural Oregonians without putting a single dollar toward improving roads and bridges around the state."

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality claims the Low Carbon Fuels Mandate will raise gas prices between \$0.06 and \$.19 per gallon. Independent studies show the effect could be over \$1.00 per gallon. Tax measures are required to originate in the Oregon House and go through a thorough process examining revenue impacts. Because the tax in the Low Carbon Fuels Mandate is 'hidden' through a program that requires fuel producers to buy credits directly from renewable energy special interests, the bill bypassed the revenue process.

"This program will harm Oregon families and small businesses," said Senator Alan Olsen. "Because it relies on a fuel supply that doesn't exist in commercial quantities, Oregonians could have to pay as much as \$285 million additionally per year at the pump without making a dent in reducing carbon emissions. Oregon voters deserve the chance to decide if this is a trade they are willing to make."

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