



OREGON SENATE REPUBLICAN CAUCUS PRESS RELEASE

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Democrats Try to Move Gas Tax Referendum Election to Avoid Voter Backlash, Senate Republicans Respond

SALEM, Ore. – Senate Republicans are responding to [new legislation](#) that would move the transportation tax hikes referendum from the November 2026 general election—where it has already been certified by the Secretary of State—to the May primary election.

Senate Republican Leader Bruce Starr (R-Dundee) said:

“Democrats couldn’t stop the referendum, so now they’re trying to rewrite the rules. But over 250,000 Oregonians signed petitions with the November 2026 election date clearly listed at the top. It’s clear that Governor Kotek and supermajority Democrats don’t want to defend their unpopular gas tax and fee scheme alongside their own names on the same ballot, so now they’re trying to sneak it past voters in a low-turnout election. Let me be clear: we will use every tool at our disposal to protect the integrity of this process and make sure Oregon voters get the election they were promised.”

Senator Christine Drazan (R-Canby) added:

“Politicians want to change the date of the gas tax vote for one reason: [politics](#). Voters signed petitions that listed the exact date of the vote if the signatures were certified. It’s time to stop playing games and start playing by the rules. The petitions clearly set the election to November 3rd, giving Oregonians the right to an election on the gas tax on that day. Politicians in Salem, worried not only about rejection of their tax increases but about rejection of themselves, are trying to game the system. Once again, they’re showing that they don’t respect voters and will do anything to hold onto power. Families across Oregon deserve better than politicians who bend the rules for political advantage.”

[Both parties](#) have acknowledged that ODOT’s budget can be balanced with existing resources, and that work is already underway. The “needing clarity” justification being [pushed](#) by Democrat leaders is nothing more than a weak excuse to avoid accountability.

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