



March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2022

Governor Kate Brown  
900 Court Street, Ste. 254  
Salem, OR 97301-4852

Dear Governor Brown,

On behalf of the 65,000 working Oregonians in the natural resources sector that Timber Unity represents, I am writing to you today to act with urgency to keep Oregonians working during this unprecedented fuel crisis.

This March marks the close of two years of Oregonians living under Covid-19 mandates. Some of those executive orders pushed businesses to the brink of financial catastrophe while working to comply with those orders. Further, even as businesses and families struggled during the Covid-19 pandemic, the state has received record-high tax revenues, in part, as the result of inflationary growth that consumers are paying in the price of groceries, goods, services, and at the gas pump.

However, your execution of those orders demonstrated the breadth and depth of gubernatorial control in circumstances of emergency. A new crisis is at our door, and it demands a response.

Today, our natural resource industries are in a state of emergency, and we are asking for your immediate consideration to exercise emergency orders for the good of Oregon businesses and workers, and for consumers who are at the breaking point with their personal family finances.

If we are to keep food, goods, and services running while fuel and diesel prices are climbing to epic levels, it is within your immediate power to provide relief to commercial and workforce drivers. We urgently need an offset of skyrocketing fuel prices that has made it difficult for workers to commute to work. This unprecedented fuel crisis is drastically driving up the costs in the natural resource sectors, particularly farmers and fishers who rely on petroleum inputs to produce the billions of dollars in agriculture products for which Oregon is known.

To make it through this fuel crisis, we are asking you to use your emergency power authority to suspend certain fuel taxes. Doing so will not only provide immediate relief for commercial and workforce drivers, but it will also help control downstream inflationary costs like groceries, emergency food, and housing inputs at a time people are struggling with food security and affordable housing.

Timber Unity would like to offer the following for immediate support for Oregon's driving workforce:

- A temporary suspension of the .38c state gas tax. This will benefit all Oregon families and the commuting workforce.
- Lower weight mile road taxes by 50% on average from .20 cents a mile to .10c a mile, adjusted accordingly to the motor carrier table.
- Allow commercial vehicles to temporarily be able to use off-road, non-taxed/dyed fuel, which could save an additional average of .63 cents per gallon for our commercial vehicles.

If it is practicable, and should this continue to be a long-term crisis, we ask for your support to encourage the Oregon Legislature's Emergency Board to direct dollars to Oregon-based transportation, fishing, construction and farms, a fuel subsidy of \$250 per month per piece of equipment, whether it be for commercial fleets or commercial agricultural equipment.

Governor, I would also like to point out that fire season is coming and the increased cost of fuel in this crisis will make it impracticable for wildland firefighters to run equipment at a level of compensation that makes the risk of fighting fires worth the cost of running the equipment. We simply cannot go into fire season where our wildland fire crews, and logging companies, lose money due to fuel costs and do so at personal business risk and risk of loss of life and personnel. I do not know any crew who can afford work under the current contract prices while their variable costs of fuel are completely uncontrollable.

Today, businesses around Oregon are discussing where they can cut their trucks because the costs are unsustainable. Farmers are deciding whether the cost of fuel inputs will make farming this season impossible, and whether they should skip the season. You have it in your authority to take immediate action to help your constituents.

Until such time that electrification makes commercial sense, we are still going to have petroleum products doing the heavy lifting in our forests, out in our fields, in our oceans and on our roads hauling to the market, doing the commercial work that makes our state prosperous and keeps people employed.

Please lead on this issue and be a voice for the businesses who have struggled so hard this past two years. This fuel crisis is a kick in the gut for us that were thinking 2022 would be a comeback for Oregon businesses. We cannot afford another hit.

Sincerely,



Angelita Sanchez  
Timber Unity PAC Co-Director