

Ballot Measure 1

Highway tax use debated

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following are explanations of the first two state measures appearing on the May 20 primary ballot. The other measures will appear later this week.

Ballot Measure 1 would limit the uses of gasoline and other highway taxes to the construction and maintenance of public highways.

In the past, taxes collected through gasoline sales and vehicle registration fees have been used to support the policing of highways and the maintenance of parks and historic sites. Oregon's constitution allows the Parks & Recreation Division and state and county police to receive money for these purposes.

If Measure 1 is passed, the state highway fund could no longer be used as a source for the parks and police budgets.

In effect, the measure would make mandatory what Oregon legislators have already asked for — the 1979 Legislature allocated no highway funds to state and county police or the Parks & Recreation Division for the 1980-81 biennium.

The Legislature's decision to put Measure 1 on the ballot stems from a need it sees to maintain a

certain degree of road and highway upkeep.

"Certainly, the last Legislature was well convinced of the need for work on highways," says Larry Rulien, executive assistant to the state highway commissioner.

Inflation has depleted the state highway fund, Rulien says — the fund's major revenue base stems from a gas tax of 7 cents, which has not risen since 1968.

Rulien says that if the measure passes, policing of the state's highways will not be curtailed. "Police would find another source of funding," he says.

But critics of Measure 1 contend most counties are too hard-pressed to use all their funds for maintenance and construction of public roads. The measure's passage will take away money that could be used for building and maintaining new park areas, they say.

In addition, critics maintain the measure might take away funding for state bike paths, which in the past have been constructed with the help of funds from gas taxes and vehicle registration fees.

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Ballot Measure 2

Legal liquor on planes?

Ballot Measure 2, if passed, will allow the Legislature to pass laws giving airlines, buses — and maybe tour boats — the opportunity to serve liquor by the drink.

The phrase in Oregon's constitution that now limits passenger liquor licenses to "railroad corporations operating interstate trains," would be changed so the state could grant licenses to "companies operating common carriers of passengers."

The amendment would add a new revenue source for the state. Currently, airlines flying over Oregon are not legally allowed to serve liquor, but they do anyway. As one Oregon

Liquor Control Commission staffer put it, "We can't enforce Oregon law with the airlines because we have no air force."

If the measure passes, airlines, as well as bus lines, will be allowed to purchase a special Oregon license to serve liquor by the drink. Even though the state would have a hard time tracking down violators who weren't licensed, "airlines would spend the \$500 for a license to keep themselves clean and the chance of any lawsuits to a minimum," says Don Chalmers, Director of the University Office of Student Advocacy.

Though the Oregon constitution stresses temperance, the

amendment has been favored by those who see the bill as a matter of equity: If trains can serve liquor by the drink, why not buses?

Republican State Sen. George Wingard was a main force behind the measure. Licensing buses to serve liquor will induce people to use mass transit for commuting, he says, while drinking drivers will be taken from behind the wheel and put into the passenger seat.

Currently, the OLCC can grant a special one-day license for carriers that do not serve food. For instance, if a group chartered a bus to go to a Duck-Beaver football game, the OLCC can allow drinks to be served on the way.

"I envision relatively little impact" if the measure passes, OLCC Administrator Dean Smith says. Besides the airlines, he expects boats that go up and down the Columbia River will take advantage of the new statute.

The OLCC's position on the ballot measure is neutral, Smith says.

The amendment would also allow drinks to be served in places where food is not served. Currently, food must be served at a place where liquor is sold.

Bell to speak Saturday

Derrick Bell, incoming dean of the University's law school, will be the commencement speaker for the law school graduation on Saturday, May 17.

The ceremony is set for 2 p.m. at the plaza on the south side of the Law Center. If the weather proves unpleasant, the ceremony will be moved to McArthur Court.

Bell, who will replace Dean Chapin Clark in January, was selected speaker by the

graduating class. Currently a member of the Harvard University law faculty, Bell is the first black to be named dean of a major state law school with a predominantly white faculty and student body.

The law graduation is three weeks earlier than the University commencement because the law school follows an early semester calendar rather than the quarter system used by the rest of the University.

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