



Oregon's Kitchen Table – Comments and Reactions to First Consultation Healthy People Outcome Area and Revenue Findings

In response to results from the **Healthy People Outcome Area and Revenue Findings** of the first consultation, 20 members of the Kitchen Table sent us comments and reactions. We've collected those comments, and we've grouped them together under three general topic areas. Below, please find a summary of the comments on the substance of the consultation. Please note that not all comments are included in their entirety (some have been trimmed for grammar), and our aim here is to share the substantive comments on the results with you all. A few members had some technical issues that we addressed individually. We'll continue to address those concerns on an individual basis to help make the results as accessible as possible.

Thank you for continuing the discussion on both these important issues and what your fellow Oregonians are thinking!

1. Perceptions of government interest/responsiveness to public input.

- *"It is obvious that nobody believes that this process will influence our legislators. It is also obvious that the majority of individuals regard government as wasteful and totally out of touch with the public. Where did it all go wrong? Remember when government employees were called civil servants? Now they think they are power brokers. They have forgotten who pays them. At some time in the future, and I am talking near future, government needs to be more realistic, more goal oriented, cost effective and more responsive."*
- *"I think the results are very interesting. I wonder how useful they are to the people who we choose to make our government work. I think this exercise is useful for me but wonder why the people we choose to represent us are so stuck for ideas or backbone that they must resort to this sort of information."*

- *“Given the comments from the statewide panel at the end - having pretty much NO confidence that our public leaders will pay attention to the feedback we’ve provided here - which is not surprising, but quite disheartening - is there any (and if so, what is it?) plan for the other side of this dialog? I’d like to hear what public officials’ reactions to this data are, and how it will shape their views on policy...let’s get an actual dialog started.”*
- *“If the results are going to inform decision-makers (which it had better, or else it is a waste of time), this process is really important. Decision-makers should know exactly who they are hearing (e.g. residents for 30 years, part-time residents, or residents of another state; employed or not; city or rural; rich or poor; etc.). On the other hand, perhaps the results will just be ignored, as most respondents seem to think. I hope not.”*

2. Addressing the Kicker and tax reform.

- *“This will need some compromise, creative ideas and making tough, sometime unpopular decisions. We can’t always be governed by only the popular ideas. Sometimes we need rule and regulations that are hard to swallow but necessary. The kicker is one of those. I think we all like to get money back. However, should we be getting money back when we don’t have enough in the coffers to do the work of government?”*
- *“I am disappointed to see people suggest the elimination of the Kicker. It’s a boon to the taxpayers of Oregon. Keep in mind this fact: The last time we were given a Kicker, it came right before Christmas time. People used it to buy presents, and retail sales in Oregon SURGED while the rest of the country had decreased retail sales during that same time. If you’re going to eliminate the kicker, then you need to lower taxes so that more money stays in the pockets of Oregonians. Because if we have more money, we have more money to spend, which typically helps the local (and state) economy.”*
- *“Taxing out of state visitors is a sure way to destroy our struggling tourism industry. As someone that works for the largest independently owned hotel chain based in the Pacific Northwest, I have seen the horrific effects the economy has on our industry. We already are subject to a 1% State Lodging Tax that is supposedly earmarked for ‘tourism’. How have you been spending that money? How have you increased tourism in Oregon? I see lots of ads for California here, but I can’t recall seeing any in California when I go back to visit.”*
- *“It looks like the people have spoken. We’re just so very tired of being lied to, taxes upon taxes, tax money spent with no conception of holding anyone responsible for the results of that investment, stop just throwing money on some people’s pet projects, put the money where it will do some good for society.”*

3. State spending and the PERS system.

- *"Anything that has to do with Oregon Govt. must first resolve PERS and controlling energy costs."*
- *"While I think the information is generally useful, anyone who can rub two sticks together knows a left -centric Legislature for a prolonged period creates bankrupt policies."*
- *"The state needs more supervision of how school districts spend money--and there is some movement in that direction... Enough money for supt. raises, but not for school based personnel? Rather than the vague "the state should live within its means", there need to be conversations about that, and also about the high PERS payouts. If someone like an Athletic Director for a major university is paid out of "other funds" and the budget does not go through Ways and Means, should that person be PERS eligible?"*