

As a resident of Marion County, and as a voter and taxpayer in the State of Oregon, I would like to voice my opposition to HB 2974, which authorizes formation of a bridge district for Linn, Marion, Polk, and Yamhill counties with the authority to levy property taxes to plan, finance, construct, operate, and maintain bridges over Willamette River in the Salem area.

A third bridge over the Willamette in Salem has been opposed by a clear majority of Salem residents for many years. Our city council finally rejected the proposed bridge in a recent decision after much debate. At a time when our city, our state, and our nation should be working diligently to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels, increasing traffic volume with yet another bridge is counterintuitive to that goal. Adding to greenhouse gas emissions with increased traffic and driving miles is the opposite direction Oregonians want or need to go.

As a voter who has already weighed in on this issue more than once, I am also angry by what appears to be an “end run” around the will voiced by the People through our Salem City Council. We do not need a “Bridge District” with the authority to tax property owners for a bridge many of us in the four counties will not use on a regular basis. If tolls are required to pay for the bridge, I can guarantee most of us will find another route to avoid them. The project’s estimated cost is over \$400 million. Local transportation dollars should be spent refitting existing infrastructure in ways that will benefit everyone—not building a “convenience” bridge for a few.

I am not personally affected by the proposed location of this unwanted third bridge, but I do know it could have adverse impact on some of the most valuable farmland in our state. At

a time when we need to be finding ways to be better stewards of our lands, paving over farmland seems colossally short-sighted. It also has the potential for displacing a sizable population of low-income people from their current housing, which we also do not need. Again, why should the common good fall victim to the convenience of the few?

I urge the House Committee considering this bill to reject it. Salem does not need a third bridge!

Respectfully,

Kathleen Daniel  
Marion County