

Representatives and Senators of the Joint Committee on Transportation,

This bill (HB 3065, amendment -5) should be adjusted significantly if it is to be adopted.

Having listened to the hearing today, I highlight the importance of the testimony from Portland Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty. She raised a number of critical points, but I want to draw attention to the need for ODOT to invest in 82nd Avenue before that arterial is transferred to the City of Portland. I have lived in Portland since my birth in 1985, all but 2 of those years on the East side of the city, mostly along Cesar Chavez Boulevard in both NE and SE Portland. 82nd Avenue was in the geography of my childhood a hard boundary, a place my parents warned me to avoid or be safe around when I grew old enough to expand my personal transportation horizons via my bike. Part of that warning was a problematic stereotype perpetuated by me and my own family, but most of that warning was a practical concern by my parents that a trip to Madison HS, Uruapan, or Fubonn could easily end in my injury, or my death. The sidewalks are narrow, the crosswalks sparse, and the continued under investment in the roadway by ODOT had led even in my youth to dangerous driver behaviors. Now, at age 35, on my most recent trip to an office on 82nd, I found crossing on my bike treacherous still, even at a crossing point of a designated greenway. There is such an amazing and diverse community of businesses and residents in the area who have long deserved their fare share of ODOT's attention, but instead, ODOT remains intent on expanding highways to the detriment of middle schoolers in NE Portland rather than helping those who they've harmed in the past. We cannot let ODOT dump that responsibility on the City of Portland, which has many of its own underinvestment problems to contend with.

I strongly support the introduction of congestion pricing. Drivers must pay their fare share, and today they most certainly do not. Gas taxes demonstrably do not support the maintenance of roads which are damaged by wear and tear not from pedestrians, bus riders, mobility device users, and bikers, but by cars, trucks and freight traffic on a per capita basis. Charging drivers and freight for the use of roads during peak hours, would relieve congestion, which is supportive of equity->the drivers harmed most by congestion are those working shifts who cannot be late, parents who must pick up kids from day care before they will be charged, professional drivers who rely on an efficient road network to maintain their quotas.

Congestion pricing must yield revenues which are not wasted on highway expansion. First, because congestion pricing will resolve many of the congestion issues that we face. If we apply congestion pricing, then the additional lanes (or "auxiliary lanes" as ODOT highway project salespeople call them) lose their purpose. We know that additional lanes won't reduce congestion regardless, thanks to induced demand. Second, because we as a community have equity and environmental goals that far outweigh the moderate convenience a few drivers may temporarily experience through increased highway capacity. We have sidewalks yet to be built. Potholes yet to be filled. We need to buttress the pedestrian, transit, bike facilities on surface streets which will see more traffic as drivers avoid fees on highways, in order to ensure that the most vulnerable road users do not continue to pay the price of our underinvestment. And we must look to the future and acknowledge that our automobile-focused transportation system just cannot continue. Remember what the smoke felt like last September, and the fear of fires ravaging our communities. Please change this bill to direct new revenues towards an equitable, sustainable transportation network that brings communities together. Don't let ODOT build us apart.

Best,
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