

This testimony is in opposition to the -8 amendments to HB 3065. First, the scope of these amendments appears inappropriate for the subject of the bill. I strongly believe that consequential policies like these need more direct and transparent presentation.

As far as the question of freeway expansion, I urge the legislators and ODOT to take seriously the concerns of organizations like No More Freeways PDX despite the seeming polarized nature of their views. I recognize a lot of nuance and political tradeoffs that must be accepted pragmatically. We do indeed need seismic upgrades to important bridges. Bottlenecks where otherwise 3-lane highways are reduced to 2-lanes are problematic. Going from 2 lanes to 3 is a 50% increase for the cost of one lane, whereas expansions beyond that have less and less cost efficiency. If this is the last expansion to our freeways, maybe it isn't crazy.

That said, induced demand is a real phenomenon. The newest computers and devices continue to run slowly in some ways because as soon as the CPU can process more data faster, people increase the resolution of videos, care less about efficient code in the software, and so on. LED lights are much more efficient, but instead of just reducing power consumption, we now see places in the world that put LED lights all over everything and gratuitously use all the power anyway. The same story happens with people getting more efficient air conditioners and then running them more often.

If we have any chance of building a sustainable future for our children, it will be through the radical step of prioritizing truly sustainable transportation. If any legislation provides support for freeway expansion, it must at the very least be done with the utmost transparency and with concern even by the supporters that every concern from critics has been fully processed with sincere openness to the question of whether the critics are right after all.

At the very least, I urge lawmakers to consider policy that would require more stringent sustainable-first and strong global-warming-mitigation requirements for all future transportation and infrastructure decisions.