

Co-Chairs Beyer and McLain, and Members of the Joint Committee on Transportation:

I'm writing in opposition to HB 3065-8. It is nonsensical, bordering on unconscionable, that ODOT wants to borrow money to expand freeways, and then make Oregonians pay back the bondholders for billion dollar boondoggles that won't even solve the congestion they were supposed to address, while worsening emissions and air-quality! Not only is this criminally negligent with respect to the climate crisis -- we all know very well that transportation is 40% of Oregon's GHG emissions, that we have less than 10 years to halve them, and that we're currently heading in the wrong direction -- but it is a criminally irresponsible use of our state's finite budget.

The sane course of action, both with respect to ameliorating the impact our transportation system has on climate change, and with respect to a responsible and respectful use of our tax-dollars, is to pilot peak-hour congestion pricing first, before any gargantuan road-building projects have been set in motion, because this will make most, if not all of them, unnecessary.

This committee should mandate that the revenue from congestion pricing be spent not on criminally wasteful and destructive freeway expansions, but on multimodal transportation improvements that will benefit all the folks who choose not to drive, and will entice even more people out of their cars when they see that there are actually -- finally -- safe, pleasant, convenient, and affordable options besides dangerous, space-hogging, resource wasting single-occupancy vehicles. ODOT could actually -- finally -- make the necessary transformation from being a road-building agency to being the full-service transportation agency our future demands.

ODOT could, should, and must invest in building fully accessible walkable communities, protected bike infrastructure and a complete bike network, public e-bike charging stations, high speed rail, frequent bus service, electrified buses, intercity buses, and maintaining and making safe our existing roads, on which far too many people are dying.

Finally, it is 2021, and the hour is late. I am the mother of two young children, and I fear for their future on this planet. I hope the legislators on this committee understand the gravity of the climate crisis we are facing, but I fear that some of you do not. Support for this bill means a vote for NOT cutting greenhouse gas emissions, NOT making public transportation accessible for all, NOT making our deadly streets safer, and NOT investing in a green, livable, humane future for Oregon's children, and we will hold you accountable.