

TO: Joint Committee on Transportation

Date: May 11, 2021

RE: HB 3065 -8

Co-Chairs Senator Beyer and Representative McLain, Co-vice Chairs Senator Boquist and Representative Noble and members of the committee.

I am a resident of NE Portland and live near the Rose Quarter. When I drove my car to commute to work in Beaverton, I frequently entered I-84 at 33<sup>rd</sup> and traveled I-5 to Exit 1D onto Highway 26. The heart of the Rose Quarter everyday and back again until I saw Al Gore's 'An Inconvenient Truth'. As inconvenient as the truth of climate change is we must take action. So, at 60 years old I got a bicycle and started a multimodal commute from NE Portland to Beaverton. Since I retired, I've been looking for ways to make even bigger reductions in our greenhouse gas emissions from transportation.

HB3065 -8 is getting closer to that goal and it still has a long way to go. In Section 1, I suggest a change in priority for spending to put implementation of a toll program for congestion pricing as the top priority. Experience in other locations tells us that congestion pricing will be effective and widening will not be needed.

The toll program must be an effective and equitable congestion pricing program. Use the funds from the congestion pricing for multimodal transportation options. Although ODOT clarified that they envision the toll program to include congestion pricing we need them to assure us they know the difference in program design. Developing a toll program to pay back bond holders is not the same program needed to persuade drivers to modify their travel schedule to avoid contributing to congestion. In the first example we want more drivers to pay the toll to pay the bond holders. In the second we want drivers to avoid times of congestion unless it is absolutely necessary and worth the additional cost to them. Success is taking in less revenue and we know bond holders would not like that.

It is very important that the congestion prices be equitable. Trucking companies can and should pass costs onto their customers who can pass costs onto product consumers. They will benefit the most from opening 'the parking lot that is I-5' to less congestion. Some small trucking and transportation businesses may be able to make a case that they are 'price takers' and an equitable system would allow them to apply to be charged less. Similarly, members of the general public have different needs and incomes and should be able to apply for immediate reductions if they can demonstrate both limited income and need with no viable alternatives based on their physical condition and travel path. I don't expect everyone over 60 to get a bike. Our modern transponder technology should allow this variation in price at the time of travel after a simple application for a needs-based reduction is made.

As funds from the congestion pricing go to multimodal transportation, I see a day when fewer people will feel they need to drive a single occupancy vehicle on these roads. Public transit will become the norm and new last mile chauffer businesses will develop.

The provision for seismic retro fit for bridges is an important emergency preparedness measure. These retro fit projects should include rail or dedicated bus lanes to help reduce the need for individual vehicles and suburban employers should be incentive to provide electric shuttles from the end of the transit line to their businesses.

I recommend that the priorities be:

- Congestion pricing first
- Simultaneous increase in multimodal transportation and safety projects throughout the region.
  - This will provide the constructions jobs projected by the road widening.
  - These projects will encourage alternatives to paying the congestion prices.
  - Multimodal transportation and safely projects also decrease greenhouse gas emissions.
- Seismic retro fit of bridges.
  - These can be engineered to include the weight of light rail.
  - Jobs will also be generated by this work.
  - Greenhouse gas emissions of the materials and equipment used will hopefully be balanced out by the future emissions saved.
- Electrification of the transportation sector.

Only after these four priorities are accomplished should we begin to consider widening any freeways or adding new roads.

I have attended several ODOT and OTC meetings. It is clear to me that the agency is trying to plan for the future of transportation but that they lack the vision and courage to take steps very far from what they see as their main mission, building roads. Your direction and legislative action will help move them in the right direction. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Jane Stackhouse  
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