
Co-Chairs McLain and Beyer, members of the committee:

Thank you for the ongoing discussion on HB 3065 and the -8 amendments. Below we have provided some answers to questions that Rep. Boshart Davis asked local governments during the May 13, 2021 Joint Transportation Committee meeting.

HB2017 committed to funding the Rose Quarter Project, and the intent of this bill is to continue to fulfill that commitment. How does this bill affect your position on the project?

The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners has not taken a formal position on the Rose Quarter Project. Multnomah County is supportive of reserving toll revenue that is raised in our region for projects in our region.

If this bill passes, what benefits does this provide for the local jurisdictions that they don't have already? What exactly is in this bill that brought the local jurisdictions to a place of support?

Tolling roadways, when not implemented properly, could harm our vulnerable and underserved residents who may not be able to afford the toll prices. The -8 amendment includes a program for low-income users to address this concern, which allows local governments to help mitigate impacts to marginalized communities already struggling with access to reliable transportation.

Tolling can also create diversion, whereby drivers try to avoid tolls, and clog up arterial roads, local bridges and previously quiet neighborhoods. The -8 amendment allows ODOT to plan for and make investments in the appropriate multimodal and safety investments to lessen the impacts of diversion and create a well-functioning transportation system in our region.

Finally, a commitment to multimodal improvements can reduce emissions in the transportation sector, which is a major component of our region's greenhouse gas emissions. We support the clear commitment to addressing diversion, safety and multimodal improvements on both the interstate highways themselves as well as adjacent streets and highways that is outlined in the -8.

How do you expect your local communities to react to tolling? How do you manage that?

Our region has been discussing the possibility of tolling for years at regional tables and will continue to do so. Like any new tax or fee, there will need to be robust community engagement so that community members understand the mechanism, what it means for their household's budget and what difference it will make in their community. Our intention is to work with ODOT and others to develop a congestion management system that is informed by the needs of our region as well as our statewide partners.

Sincerely,

Taylor Steenblock

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