

Submitter: Brian Smith
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation
Measure: HB2098

I support replacing this bridge, but oppose HB 2098 -2, because this legislation as currently written jeopardizes a right-sized Bridge Replacement, right now. I support the forthcoming -3 Amendment (and the policy recommendations offered by the Just Crossing Alliance) that ensures this replacement bridge project moves forward smoothly with finance guardrails and major investments in mass transit.

We don't need a massive project that increases the bridge's size and requires replacement of miles of roads and multiple interchanges leading to this massive new bridge. We need something that won't fall down in the earthquake and makes it easier for people to get where they need to be without using cars. I live in a household with one car and two drivers, which is only possible in a place where public transit and cycling are legitimate travel options. With 40% of our state's climate emissions coming from transportation in the middle of a dire emergency, it's a terrible act of negligence towards future generations to undertake projects that commit us to more vehicles on the road. This country may be adopting more ambitious vehicle electrification programs, but it will still take generations to completely decarbonize the transportation sector and there are negative impacts of road vehicles that will never go away regardless of fuel source. Salmon in the Columbia River have enough challenges without increasing the amount of poisonous tire dust, for example. Committing state general funds to this project as proposed will prevent the investment in dozens of state programs with more value to society for decades when the project inevitably goes massively over budget.

Let's build a right-sized bridge and surrounding infrastructure that we can be proud of in thirty years and not something that we'll regret in twenty years when it's finally finished.