

I support replacing the I-5 bridge, but oppose HB 2098 -2, because this legislation as currently written jeopardizes a right-sized bridge replacement. I support the forthcoming -3 Amendment (and the policy recommendations offered by the Just Crossing Alliance) that will ensure this replacement bridge project moves forward smoothly with explicit pro-labor provisions, finance guardrails, and major investments in mass transit and active transportation.

It's financially irresponsible to use general obligation bonds instead of State Highway Fund for the I-5 and Rose Quarter projects. Doing so would divert critical resources from other priorities like housing, education, and behavioral health. Using the General Fund to pay for this project would also set a dangerous precedent that would degrade the State's ability to address these funding priorities. Tolling and mileage and weight-based fees should be studied as supplemental funding sources for road projects.

The -2 Amendment also strips crucial guardrails from the I-5 bridge replacement and lacks a cap on the cost of the Rose Quarter Project. I support the forthcoming -3 Amendment and the following guardrails proposed by the Just Crossing Alliance:

The Oregon Legislature should stipulate that the bonds in any form should not be issued until the following conditions are met, which relate to total project costs:

1. Federal grants have been secured: If federal grant awards are lower than currently forecasted, the project must be downsized to meet those financial realities.
2. An investment grade toll revenue study to be completed by the fall of 2024. With tolling so new to the region, this study is critical for determining how much toll revenue Oregon and Washington can realistically expect.
3. Require the reinstatement of an Independent Review Panel, modeled on the previous panel that monitored the Columbia River Crossing in 2010 and provided crucial budgetary and design feedback independent of the principal state agencies.
4. The Coast Guard approves the project: The Coast Guard is an equal partner in this project in determining the navigational clearance determination, which specifies limitations on the height of ships passing under the bridge. The IBRP has not earned their approval and if IBRP has to mitigate through compensation to river users who might be impacted, this will add to the total project cost. Note that a lift span would likely remove the need to compensate users who might have been impacted as they will have the same level of access.
5. Retain important legislative safeguards: HB2098 -2 currently proposes to repeal important fiscal safeguards established in 2013. We urge you to retain the current law regarding these safeguards, which were put into place through robust public and legislative dialogue and are essential to the accountability and transparency of this project. The following are set to be removed by the -2 amendment:
 - a) Certification of the financial plan by the State Treasurer, including a review of an Investment Grade Analysis of toll revenue
 - b) Requirement of a Coast Guard permit for the project
 - c) Restrictions on pledging money appropriated to Cities and Counties as security for bond repayments

ODOT should also study at least one alternative design that would lower costs while preserving critical project elements like high-capacity transit and robust active transportation networks onto and across the bridge. The current design, which requires replacing several interchanges, is bloated and financially

irresponsible. The I-5 bridge replacement should prioritize safety, active transportation, and safety; it should not add motor-vehicle capacity, as doing so would induce more driving demand and worsen climate change.

Please discard the -2 Amendment to this bill and prioritize financial responsibility, good governance, and truly multimodal planning.