

Submitter: Claire Vlach
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 explicit pro-labor provisions, finance guardrails, and major investments in mass transit.

As a member of the Powell Boulevard Safety Workgroup, which has been working to reduce injuries and deaths on one of our state's many orphan highways, it is disheartening to have to fight for scraps of money for much-needed safer crosswalks while ODOT simultaneously asks the legislature for a blank check for a massive freeway expansion project. I would like to see a right-size bridge that would deliver the necessary seismic and mass transit upgrades that we need, without committing excess funds that we desperately need to fund the Great Streets program, as well as other statewide priorities like housing, mental health, etc. I would also like to see a bill that prioritizes our children's future, by limiting 1) the climate impacts of the new bridge, and 2) the amount of future state funds that will be diverted to paying off debt for this bridge rather than directly serving the people of Oregon.