

Submitter: Paul Runge
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation
Measure: HB2098

To whom it may concern,

My name is Paul Runge. I live in SE Portland near 82nd and Powell, former and current ODOT facilities respectively. I walk, bike, take transit, and drive to get around. I'm an urban planner but just writing as an individual constituent and resident.

Like so many others who have testified, I oppose HB2098 -2. I support replacing the I-5 bridge, particularly via the recently released -3 amendment.

Our state has clear greenhouse gas reduction goals. The decades-long transition to electric vehicles is only part of the answer—driving less now is the other part. Academic research and some of ODOT's own commissioned studies have demonstrated that adding freeway lanes leads to more driving. A freeway isn't like a simple pipe moving water, a system where you can add more capacity with a bigger pipe but nothing about the water changes. A freeway is a transportation facility used by humans whose behavior responds to changing conditions and incentives. More capacity yields momentary congestion relief, which then incentivizes more driving. More capacity enables more far-flung car-dependent exurbs, which necessitates more driving still. This is a feedback loop, and we shouldn't spend our transportation dollars on feedback loops that act against our own goals. We should invest in transportation that provides continued efficiency as the user base grows: transit.

Our state also has a limited budget, and HB2098 -2 is not only going to overspend that budget, but not safeguard against cost overruns. I see evidence of our limited transportation budget every day when I walk, take transit, or drive on Powell and 82nd in their unsafe and poorly maintained conditions. When you vote for something that spends limited transportation dollars on a freeway expansion rather than fixing the unsafe, crash-prone conditions at my and so many others' doorsteps, you're telling us our safety and our neighborhoods are not a priority. What matters instead, apparently, is some Washingtonian's commute time—until the freeway fills right back up as the research suggests!

Governor Kotek doesn't want to blow our bonding capacity on this, and she's right: we have bigger fish to fry. Let's right size this bridge, right size the investment by trimming out the freeway expansions and interchanges, and take Oregon into a brighter future.

Thanks for considering my testimony,

Paul Runge
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