

Submitter: Emily Guise

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation

Measure: HB2098

As a Portlander who visits SW Washington, 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 -3 Amendment (and the policy recommendations offered by the Just Crossing Alliance) that ensures this replacement bridge project moves forward smoothly with a right-sized design, explicit pro-labor provisions, financial guardrails, and major investments in mass transit.

As someone who lives just south of inner SE Powell Blvd, also known as Highway 26 and overseen by ODOT, I want our state's transportation dollars to fund safety upgrades and maintenance on orphan highways like Powell, which are some of the most deadly in Portland. Just a few months ago, I was riding my bike home and saw police vehicles blocking off Powell. It turned out that yet another person, walking across Powell as I do on a regular basis, had been hit by a driver and killed, two blocks away from me. I was devastated, because it was the 5th person killed on inner Powell in a year, and I know how easily that could have been me or a loved one.

I'm tired of Portlanders fearing for their lives on these orphan highways, which ODOT claims to not have the money to bring up to safety standards that would decrease the number of people dying on them. Yet somehow they have enough money to expand 7 miles of I-5 along with a new bridge? It's disappointing to see our state resources used in this fiscally irresponsible way, when this tax dollars could be used to save lives by investing in safer streets. That's why I support -3 amendment and oppose HB 2098 -2.