



**ECUMENICAL  
MINISTRIES**  
— OF OREGON —

April 27, 2023

Re: Support HB 2098-3

Dear Co-Chairs McLain and Frederick, Co-Vice-Chairs Boshart Davis and Boquist, and committee members,

My name is the Rev. Cecil Prescod. I am one of 27 faith leaders across the state that serve on the board of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, and I serve as the chair of EMO's Public Policy Advocacy Committee. EMO consists of 15 member denominations and hundreds of congregations and faith-based organizations.

EMO urges this committee to amend HB 2098 with the -3 amendment to address this project's cost, further justice, protect public health, and minimize environmental and climate impacts.

It is morally unjust to expand a freeway during the current climate crisis. Further, as a statewide organization that stands alongside Oregonians in need, EMO believes the high cost of the -2 amendment does not reflect the priorities of our neighbors. The fact that this bill draws on Oregon's general fund suggests that this bridge is more important than:

- Lowering Oregon's worst-in-the-nation K-12 homelessness rate;
- Providing clean drinking water in rural Oregon;
- Ensuring all Oregonians have enough to eat; or
- Adequately funding climate change solutions.

Crucially, EMO supports a **phased approach** to this multi-mile highway and interchange project, an approach that connects our communities without endangering the general fund or the climate. The -3 amendment accomplishes these goals.

Thank you.

Rev. Cecil Prescod  
Minister of Faith Formation, Ainsworth United Church of Christ  
Chair, Public Policy Advocacy Committee, and Board Member  
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon