

Submitter: Joseph Van Kleeck
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation
Measure: HB2098

My name is Joseph Van Kleeck. I am 30 years old, I was born here and have been a resident of the Portland area almost my entire life. I would like to submit testimony opposing amendments 2 and 4 to HB2098.

I live in Portland and commute by car to and from Hillsboro five days a week, primarily along Highway 26. I know how congested it gets coming back into Portland during rush hour, especially for all the WA license plates going back into Vancouver or beyond. Sometimes I drive north up to Highway 30 and make my way into Portland that way, if Google Maps shows my straight shot home has major congestion, and I get to see traffic over the St. Johns bridge at a crawl, that stretches onto the right lane of HWY30 at least a quarter mile, as many of the folks headed that way are bound for Washington. It is clear that there is a massive bottleneck along the Interstate-5 bridge over the Columbia River and the bridge -- standing at over 100 years old -- is long due for a replacement, but the costs being proposed for freeway expansion in this bill are ludicrous and I have doubts that ODOT will "plan" to spend this money effectively.

All I see in this bill is a \$6.3 billion dollar check for ODOT to once again bungle, a heinous act amidst a period when Oregon is facing a climate crisis, skyrocketing housing and education costs, and unaffordable healthcare. ODOT does not seem interested investing in safety projects to reduce traffic fatalities; nor do they seem to understand that induced demand will bottleneck whatever lanes this freeway expansion hopes to add, as increased traffic will only clog the roads in the next decade and we will be back where we are today. ODOT is not interested in transparency, as many of their projects go vastly overbudget with hardly a say from the people of Oregon. ODOT does not care for the environment, as they continue to emphasize the private automobile in almost every one of the projects, without conducting an Environmental Impact Statement like what should have been done with the Rose Quarter Freeway Expansion proposal. Furthermore, if we are spending this much money on a freeway expansion for I-5, what does this leave for the other 700 seismically vulnerable bridges across the state?

ODOT does not seem to care for people, plain and simple. They will continue to act in the interests of the automobile industry and the hapless construction companies clamoring to get the lowest bid to build unimpressive and ugly stretches of concrete and asphalt, so long as they are not held to account. ODOT does not deserve a single cent unless they can prove otherwise; they could easily guarantee to conduct an EIS and explore alternatives, but they are afraid to because perhaps they know it

will show the alternatives are better for PEOPLE in the long run, not cars and their insipid lobbyists. ODOT needs to grow a backbone and act as a state agency that works for people, not private entities. Oregon deserves so much better than what ODOT is proposing here, and deserves an agency that can act with transparency and accountability rather than one that plays into the pockets of greedy, sociopath corporations demanding even more cars on the road for their bottom line.