

Submitter: Marilyn Costamagna
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation
Measure: HB2098

Even though I am in favor of replacing this bridge yet I oppose HB 2098 -2 because as currently written this legislation threatens an immediate right-sized bridge replacement. Hence, I strongly support the -3 Amendment to HB 2098 and the policy recommendations offered by the Just Crossing Alliance that ensure that this bridge replacement project will move forward smoothly with a bridge that has been structurally designed with the right dimensions, has explicit pro-labor provisions, has financial guardrails and includes major investments in mass rapid transit [the sensible solution to decrease car dependency].

Additional reasons why Amendment -3 to HB 2098 has won my support:

It is disappointing that ODOT has allocated billions for freeway expansions but has not budgeted much for safety projects while the state continues to experience an increasing number of traffic fatalities on streets like SE Powell, SW Hall and TV Highway.

It was discouraging to note that HC 2098's -2 Amendment's language still showed no support for unionized labor-friendly practices including the required establishment of a Project Labor Agreement or a Community Benefits Agreement.

Don't policymakers understand that ultimately adding more freeway lanes will just result in adding more traffic jams? Hence, I am of the opinion that freeway expansion is just another way to allow more and more cars to crowd into North and Northeast Portland. Most of these cars will not be EVs or even hybrids. Therefore, just think of the increase in traffic [more grid lock] and pollution issues that expanded freeways will invite and also allow!

When it seems that 40% of Oregon's carbon emissions come from transportation, then why is ODOT still willing to spend billions on a freeway that will continue to increase these greenhouse gas emissions instead of investing in better local and statewide transit options?

I am concerned about the fact that ODOT's projects have at times come in over budget. I am also concerned that this "bloated freeway expansion" coupled with ODOT projects' propensity to cost more than budgeted could rob Oregonians of desperately needed funds for basic maintenance and safety projects for ODOT roads across the state.

I am very concerned that the state would spend \$7 billion dollars on a singular seismic retrofit when ODOT's own studies report that Oregon has over 700 seismically unsound bridges across the state that need to be replaced. It seems that the state should rethink the spending of the \$7 billion for one bridge.....Something seems out of balance here.

It seems odd that ODOT is disinterested in studying potentially and significantly cheaper options like a tunnel under the river or a lift bridge that would save billions of dollars. Why is this?

Why is it that HB 2098 is written to use General Fund resources to pay for a new bridge instead of bonding against existing Highway Trust Fund dollars? This seems to be a maneuver that would directly pit this bridge project against other statewide budget priorities like investing in affordable housing or education?

I am also finding it hard to understand why the state isn't prioritizing investments in passenger rail, basic bus service and other ways to get around not only for the 1 in 4 Oregonians who can't or don't drive but also for all Oregon drivers who could be using mass rapid transportation instead of driving a personal car to work or to other local destinations.

Oregon needs to be leader in providing clean, safe and efficient mass rapid transportation that works toward the zero emissions goal set for 2050 by the U.S. government and not to be a state that still invests billions in projects that are seemingly counterproductive to this national zero emissions vision.

Urging your support for the -3 Amendment to HB 2098.