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Oregon Joint Committee on Transportation
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Comments on HB 2098 Amendments -2 and -3

Dear members of the Joint Committee on Transportation,

My name is Brian Davis and I've spent the last 15 years as a transportation planning consultant based out of Portland. During that time, I've been one of the profession's most vocal opponents of freeway expansion, and have worked in opposition to the previous iteration of this project as well as the proposed I5RQ freeway expansion.

Well, no more. Having launched my own small firm in 2020, and having seen estimates for the IBR project come in at more than \$6 billion-with-a-B dollars(!), I've found Jesus, so to speak. So I am writing today in support of the extravagant "-2" amendments to HB 2098, and in opposition to the cheapskate "-3" amendments.

I will let you in on an open secret known to basically every engineer and planner in the transportation consulting space: Freeway expansions do nothing whatsoever to mitigate traffic congestion and indeed make matters worse in the long run, but they are absolutely unbeatable for the bottom lines of consulting firms.

Economist Joe Cortright recently called the -2 amendments, "perhaps the most fiscally irresponsible legislation ever to be considered by the Oregon Legislature." Well, that may be true from the State's perspective but it certainly ain't from mine. I'll be honest, I have no idea what the -2 amendments even say because I can't get more than two sentences in before all I start seeing are dollar signs.

There's just so much planning, design, modeling, and other consulting work here it defies belief. For starters, you're going to need someone to cook the books on the EIS, which would certainly show that alternatives to the expansion are a far better route otherwise. Then you'll need someone who is able to convincingly argue in favor of an exceedingly unlikely set of assumptions upon which any benefit to the expansion rests. You'll of course need to pinpoint the minimal expenditure you can get away with to satisfy the bike and transit goofs. And so much more. If my little firm could get in on even a small part of this, that just represents so much money and influence for us that we could...I dunno, presumably leverage into more money and influence? I haven't thought that far yet.

And the best part? Since none of this is going to do a damn bit of good for the region's mobility and climate issues, it can only lead to another capital project and more billable work! It's a nifty business model, really. While it was fun to ride the moral high ground for a while, the pie has just grown to a point where I want my slice.

So support the -2 amendments, and hell, support the next freeway expansion too. I'm sure the whiny "future generations" will figure out how to coexist with their dystopian climate reality. Or they won't, but who cares? We'll be rich, happy, and dead by that point anyway.

With Best Regards,



Brian A. Davis, AICP
Principal, Studio Davis

New slogan: "Freeway expansion is our bottom line!"