



Co-Chairs McLain and Frederick and the Joint Committee on Transportation,

Sunrise PDX is a youth-led, climate justice organization. Our goal is to uplift and empower the voices of future generations who will live through environmental consequences caused by this legislature's negligence. While we understand the need to replace the Interstate 5 bridge connecting Portland to Vancouver, **we do not support the freeway expansion plan that ODOT has presented.**

Redeveloping seven interchanges along I-5 is not a bridge replacement. Adding two auxiliary lanes along five miles of the interstate is not a bridge replacement. Prioritizing a fixed-bridge design that forces the redevelopment of these interchanges is a bad-faith attempt from ODOT to force a freeway expansion. Above all, the current bridge design fails to allow large boats from passing underneath due to its inadequate height. A vertical lift bridge design would solve this problem, but a fixed span is the only design ODOT is currently pursuing.

For presenting a project that is two-parts freeway expansion, one-part inadequate bridge design, ODOT should be receiving much more scrutiny for their incompetence. It's disappointing to see only one representative deliver pointed questions to ODOT during informational meetings. For a once-in-a-lifetime investment, why are so few legislators ensuring we build this right?

Understandably, Oregon needs to act quickly to secure federal funding for the IBR project. Sunrise PDX agrees this bridge needs replacing and needs federal funding in order to replace it. However, we need to tackle the climate crisis, and **a freeway expansion will make overcoming the climate crisis impossible.** Billions of dollars that could go towards de-carbonizing our transportation and energy grids are instead planned to be invested in crisis-exacerbating infrastructure.

A smaller project without freeway expansion is possible. A smaller project would replace the bridge within the existing interstate infrastructure, would include a public transit light rail to connect Portland and Vancouver, and would remain within our financial means as the State of Oregon. This alternative plan allows the state to fund other critical priorities while maintaining a crucial link between Oregon and Washington. Priorities like housing, healthcare, education, and the environment could be adequately funded when Oregon finances a right-sized project. Investing in the planned freeway expansion makes funding these priorities impossible.

Sunrise PDX, along with educators, health-care workers, religious leaders, engineers, parents, students, and organizations with the Just Crossing Alliance, believe in a right-sized bridge right now. **We compel the Joint Committee on Transportation to protect our future by passing the - 3 amendment of House Bill 2098.**

Thank you,
Sunrise PDX
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