

Testimony for Joint Committee on Transportation Preservation and Modernization July 1, 2017

I am very disappointed to see that the I-5/Rose Quarter project has been kept in the Transportation Package (HB 2017) despite news reports this past Wednesday that it was going to be removed. I believe that legislators have received incorrect information about whether tolls may be applied to a freeway without expanding it.

While it is true that there is a Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) program that allows states to place tolls on added lanes, and facilities such as tunnels and bridges, there is also a program that allows congestion pricing to be applied in situations where there is no substantial construction or reconstruction. This FHWA program is called the "Value Pricing Pilot Program" (VPPP).

See https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/congestionpricing/value_pricing/index.htm

The FHWA web site clearly states that while there are no longer any discretionary grants available for the VPPP, states may still obtain tolling authority under this program.

Quote: "While the VPPP no longer receives funds to award to projects under MAP-21, and requirements for toll agreements under Section 129 and Section 166 tolling were eliminated, entities can still seek authority to toll under the program."

Given the huge costs and impacts of the I-5/Rose Quarter project, please investigate the possibility of implementing congestion pricing on this portion of I-5 without expanding capacity. Expansion will attract more traffic and produce more greenhouse gas emissions, without solving congestion. Congestion pricing will reduce traffic, easing congestion and allowing freight and motorists faster travel times with reduced emissions.

The money that would go toward expanding I-5 would be far better spent on maintaining our existing road system, improving safety without expanding capacity.

Sincerely,

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