

Dear Sen. Taylor, Rep. Nosse, and Oregon legislators:

Tomorrow, ODOT will present its updated cost to complete regarding the I-5 Rose Quarter Freeway Expansion.

I write to you in opposition to this project and ask you to hold ODOT accountable for its consistent lies during this process.

First, ODOT's cost estimations continue to spiral out of control and it has an abysmal track record of transparency and accountability.

Second, ODOT has refused to conduct a full Environmental Impact Statement on this project. This comes despite 2000 comments in opposition to the Environmental Assessment and serious questions raised about the project. For example, ODOT did not mention in the EA an impact on the Willamette River and the critical habitat of salmon despite the fact that they will be building over the river. This shows a blatant disregard for documenting the full impact of the project and opens them up to prolonged and costly lawsuits that will only hurt taxpayers in the end.

Third, ODOT continues to change the rationale for why this project is needed. In the EA they buried the fact that they assumed a new CRC bridge was built in order to pad the numbers for congestion relief. However, they did not include congestion pricing, which is the only proven method for reducing traffic congestion.

Lastly, ODOT claims the Rose Quarter requires safety upgrades, but the facts show other ODOT roads are far more dangerous. ODOT needs to make improvements elsewhere to active transportation users (bicyclists, pedestrians, and transit riders), and be a better partner with city planning departments to integrate infrastructure.

Expanding freeways is expanding fossil fuel infrastructure. To meet our climate goals, we need to be removing that infrastructure, not doubling down on it. I'm asking you to hold ODOT accountable and be a partner in making Oregon's transportation more sustainable.

Sincerely,  
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