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Willamette Valley Office • 454 Willamette St, Ste 213 • Eugene, OR 97401

Southern Oregon Office • PO Box 2442 • Grants Pass, OR 97528

Dear Chairs Beyer and McLain, members of the Joint Committee on Transportation

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 3055. 1000 Friends of Oregon is a nonprofit, membership organization that works with Oregonians to support livable urban and rural communities; protect family farms, forests and natural areas; and provide transportation and housing choice.

We have several concerns regarding HB 3055, particularly the aspects of this Transportation Omnibus Bill that have to do with congestion pricing. When HB 2017 was implemented, one of the major components was congestion pricing designed to mitigate and manage traffic congestion in the Portland Metro Region. While sometimes used interchangeably in conversation, the distinction in choosing a congestion pricing policy versus a tolling policy has dramatic impacts on how the program is used, and what its impacts are. As HB 2017 was drafted and passed, funds generated from congestion pricing would go into a congestion relief fund that could have multiple uses, such bridge construction, improved local auto and pedestrian connections, and more. Comparatively speaking, a tolling policy scheme bonds revenue to specific projects and outcomes, often at the point of a project such as the Bridge of the Gods in the Gorge.

While we agree moving the Congestion Relief Fund to a new fund outside the State Highway Trust Fund is an important move that will give ODOT more clarity and flexibility in this fund's use, 1000 Friends of Oregon has concerns regarding the language changes in HB 3055 that would modify existing HB2017 statute around mobility management to implement tolling instead of congestion pricing.

By keeping the congestion pricing framing, it leaves ODOT more opportunities to use the fund, and also allows ODOT to see congestion pricing as a tool to create a more effective transportation system. The federal highway administration sums this up best, "At its most fundamental level, highway congestion is caused by the lack of a mechanism to efficiently manage use of capacity. When searching for a solution to the congestion problem, most people immediately think of adding a new lane to an overburdened highway.

Construction costs for adding lanes in urban areas average \$10 million per lane mile. Generally, the funding for this construction comes from the tax that drivers pay when buying gas for their vehicles. Overall, funds generated from gas taxes on an added lane during rush hours amount to only \$60,000 per year. This amount is grossly insufficient to pay for the lane addition.



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The bargain price paid by motorists for use of expensive new capacity encourages more drivers to use the expanded highway. Introducing congestion pricing on highway facilities discourages overuse during rush hours by motivating people to travel by other modes such as carpools or transit, or by traveling at other times of the day.<sup>1</sup>

We urge you to leave language in HB 3055 to outline a congestion pricing program run by ODOT, and to not modify language that would call out a tolling program instead.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brett Morgan", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Brett Morgan  
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<sup>1</sup> [https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/congestionpricing/cp\\_what\\_is.htm](https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/congestionpricing/cp_what_is.htm)