



May 11, 2021

Co-Chairs Beyers and McLain and Members of the Joint Committee on Transportation,

350 Salem Oregon is a local grassroots climate organization with some members who are constituents of Representative Paul Evans and we oppose House Bill 3065-8.

The -8 amendment continues a long history of road expansions that don't solve congestion, do increase deadly air pollution, and have contributed to Oregon's transportation system being responsible for 40% of our state's carbon emissions. By investing in further road expansions, this amendment would fuel the climate changes that lead to more and bigger wildfires and extreme weather events like the ice storm that devastated Salem and much of the Willamette Valley earlier this year.

We oppose the creation of a tolling program the Oregon Department of Transportation could bond against to expand freeways across the Portland area. Tolling's purpose is to maximize revenue (and therefore, traffic), whereas peak-time congestion pricing actually reduces traffic and congestion. Passing HB 3065-8 will mean losing the opportunity to implement equitable and environmentally-protective congestion pricing. Further, the bonding mechanism unjustly makes our children, who will bear the worst impacts of climate change, pay for the destabilization of Earth's climate.

We oppose giving ODOT a giant slush fund to expand freeways. Continuing to expand freeways in 2021, when we have less than a decade to halve our carbon emissions to avoid catastrophic climate chaos, is nonsensical and unjust. Evidence from countless freeway expansions shows traffic is like a gas, not a liquid; its volume will increase until it fills up the available space. Therefore, continuing to expand freeways runs directly counter to Oregon's commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Further, ODOT has lied to Oregonians about the size of the Rose Quarter freeway expansion project, silenced and ignored the project's critics, and seen multiple cost overruns. This isn't the right time to give ODOT billions of dollars to spend at their discretion.

Instead, **Oregon should manage congestion by implementing "value pricing" and use the revenues to invest in robust public transit systems, walkable, bicycle friendly communities, and intercity buses to reduce vehicle miles traveled.** Now is the time to put our money to work creating the kind of Oregon we can all be proud of. An Oregon where people of all ages and abilities can easily travel where they want to go without owning a car and where we've done all we can to protect our planet's climate.

Sincerely,

Clair Clark, MPP
Co-coordinator 350 Salem OR