

I live in Sisters now, but spent over 30 years living in Portland. I have a business based there and, prior to the pandemic, was traveling to Portland often. I have sat in traffic in Portland when I lived there and now. We need to reduce congestion and speed commute times, yes. But freeway expansion is not the answer. The Rose Quarter project is fraught with issues, not the least of which is that the DEQ has been misleading the public. Or perhaps not being transparent would be a kinder way to say it. But it is clear from public records documents that they were lying about freeway width in the Rose Quarter project. Couple that with traffic fatalities on 82nd Avenue, the horrific images of clearcutting wildfire lands in the Cascades and the last thing I want to do is give the agency a blank check. Which is what HB 3065 is. A blank check for fossil fuel infrastructure.

There is no sane reason to expand freeways. The -8 Amendments of House Bill 3065 aims to institute a large tolling program that ODOT would spend the next couple decades bonding against to build billions of dollars of freeway expansions at the Rose Quarter, the Abernethy Freeway Expansion in Oregon City, and the Boone Bridge Freeway Expansion near Wilsonville. Future generations will be paying off the debts of these massive expansions for decades, as well as paying for the project with worse air pollution and higher carbon emissions, all for a couple of additional lanes of freeway that won't fix congestion. While there are a few technical improvements on the -8 Amendment language that wasn't present in the -5 Amendment introduced two months ago, the fundamental crux of the bill remains abysmal – ODOT is broke, and instead of raising revenue to build infrastructure to prepare for climate change, to manage traffic congestion, to reduce air pollution or address the dozens of yearly traffic fatalities on ODOT's roads – ODOT just wants billions for more freeways that solve none of these problems and actively make them worse.

40% of Oregon's carbon emissions come from transportation. Even under the rosier of predictions for vehicle electrification, Oregonians simply must reduce the number of miles they drive as the state grows if we want to have a shot of hitting our emission reduction targets. We need to use the roads we already have better, not add more – and we instead need to be investing in public transportation, walkable communities, high speed rail, intercity buses, and maintaining existing roads.

Invest in the future, not a blank check for fossil fuel infrastructure.