

Members of the JTSSTP,

My name is Paul Runge. I'm a Portland resident. I drive, walk, bike, and take the bus to get around, and I work professionally as an urban planner.

I strongly support using congestion pricing to manage traffic levels and generate revenue for sustainable transportation investments. My understanding is that toll revenues are currently earmarked for highway projects. That is a wildly out-of-date restriction on the investment of toll revenues, rooted in a time before the field of urban planning understood the inherent inequity and the financial and environmental destructiveness of car dependency. Given the field's evolved understanding and the urgency of the climate crisis, it is imperative that we use funds raised through tolling to break us out of the status quo. Specifically, we should invest in projects that reduce car dependency, as that will 1) save households money, 2) lower carbon emissions, and 3) reduce traffic, which is particularly important for areas worried about traffic diversion due to tolls. Likewise, we should structure our tolling system with sliding scale fees to mitigate disproportionate burdens on low-income drivers. We should not use toll revenues as a way to double down in 20th century style highway investments and a status quo we know isn't working.

Thank you for considering my testimony and for your service to Oregon.

Paul Runge
Portland, 97206