

What MCAT would support in a tolling program:



MCAT recognizes that tolling is only one part of a complex system of transportation funding. With a specific focus on tolling, these are principles that will contribute to an improved and cleaner transportation system.

1. **Tolling must reduce vehicle-miles-traveled (VMT).** Meeting or exceeding our state climate goals must be a primary goal of tolling.
2. **Congestion pricing is the most effective form of tolling to accomplish these goals.** For example, driving behavior patterns would be improved by a larger toll at the highest volume times and a smaller toll or no toll during low volume times. This encourages shifting time of travel for those who can, and shifting mode of travel to carpooling, transit or active transportation for others.
3. **Improving revenue and reducing congestion are important goals of tolling.** While tolling will help finance large projects (such as the I-5 Bridge Replacement across the Columbia River) and will alleviate fiscal deficits of the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), there must be an equal focus on the twin goals of improving climate and increasing equity. Thus, the tolling income should support frequent Vancouver to Portland bus service and the extended light-rail line across the bridge. We applaud ODOT's stated intention to focus on these climate and equity goals and we look forward to their effective implementation.
4. **A cost abatement, i.e. low-income discount, program must be a central feature of the tolling program to avoid it acting as a regressive tax.** This should include consideration of need and income such as for low-income people with disabilities or those with specific work requirements that necessitate using a vehicle and should provide upfront cost offsets rather than later reimbursements.
5. **A tolling program must be designed as an integral part of a robust system of public transit and active transportation across our region.** This is how we will help to meet our climate goals, alleviate highway congestion, reduce commuting time, improve equity and improve health of communities adjacent to highways. This should include incentives for businesses to place jobs near housing to reduce commuting distances and to promote carpooling, as well as efforts to increase safety and attractiveness of public transit so as to augment ridership.
6. **A tolling program must be designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.** Verifiable and publicly available metrics must be established at the beginning of the program and then reported regularly.
7. **Tolls should be instituted simultaneously across both I-5 and I-205 Columbia River bridges.** This will avoid any massive shifts of traffic from tolled to untolled roads with resultant worsening travel times and increased pollution.

8. **Implementation of tolling across the I-5 and I-205 Columbia River bridges should begin soon.**
This is so that accurate traffic volumes over the I-5 bridge will determine appropriate size of the I-5 bridge replacement, rather than overbuilding with resultant induced demand of traffic flow and worsening of GHG emissions.
9. **It is necessary to revise the State Highway Fund (ORS 366.505).** This will allow more flexible use of tolling and other road user fees to support multimodal transportation.

References

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