

From:

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What do you want to tell legislators about the proposed \$1.9 Billion Rose Quarter Freeway Expansion and Oregon's transportation system?

I am writing today to enthusiastically endorse No More Freeways' testimony to this subcommittee:

- Investing in freeway expansion is a diversion of resources that could be better applied to other transportation projects that improve safety and reliability while reducing air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. Converting "orphan highways" to safe streets, prioritizing maintenance on local and statewide roads, repairing the state's 700+ seismically vulnerable bridges, and investing in mass transit will accomplish these goals at a vastly lower cost to the public and the environment.
- Legislators should demand ODOT revisit the Purpose and Need statement and conduct a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that studies alternatives to freeway expansion, including capping and/or decommissioning the existing highway.
- ODOT should explore freeway tolling to reduce congestion before building more lanes (any pricing level to manage congestion is likely to be lower than a toll required to fund expansion projects) and:
- Any low income pricing benefit should assist all those affected by the project whether they drive or not, and should encourage non-automobile travel options such as mass transit, e-bikes, and bike-share programs. The legislature must pursue resources to make transit not just affordable but attractive to all Oregonians, primarily by dramatically increasing TriMet service frequency.

The fundamental law of road congestion (a.k.a. "induced demand") means that any benefits of highway widening will soon be nullified by an increase in traffic to meet the added capacity. We should not be spending public money on such a doomed project at a time when the social and environmental harms of automobile dependency (wasteful land use, GHG emissions, air and water pollution, childhood respiratory illness, traffic fatalities primarily affecting poor and vulnerable road users, social atomization and alienation) are increasingly apparent. I would like to see Lower Albina restored to the bustling and vibrant neighborhood that it was before this freeway was bulldozed through its heart, not a continuation of the past century of subsidizing suburban car-dependent lifestyles on the backs of the urban poor. Thank you.