

Esteemed Co-chairs Frederick and Nathanson, and members of the Special Sub-committee on Transportation Planning:

As a retired teacher, mother and grandmother, I passionately believe that we must look to the future as we plan tolling. For the good of us all, I believe that paying for roads should not be the main objective of tolling. Rather, the main objective of all our planning, including tolling, must be to leave behind a livable planet to all those coming up behind us.

Planning for a livable future depends on how quickly we act to halt the climate crisis by rapidly lowering carbon emissions. In the case of transportation, it also means meeting the mobility needs of every income level and physical ability. If we can't plan to meet everyone's basic needs, we'll have a future filled with strife.

We can do this! We just can't do it by pretending roads and electric vehicles are all we need.

We need to incentivize reductions in vehicle miles traveled (VMT). This can be done by (1) developing other modes of transportation in addition to cars and (2) instituting congestion pricing for tolling.

1. We can – and must - invest in more rapid bus and light rail lines in our populated areas as well as high speed rail to connect cities. We need to invest in safe routes for multi-modal transit. To accomplish the later, my understanding is that we'll need to revise the State Highway Fund (ORS 366.505) to allow more flexible use of tolling and other road user fees.
2. Congestion pricing of tolls can also help reduce VMT. If a larger toll is charged at the highest volume times and a smaller toll or no toll charged during low volume times, we can encourage drivers to shift their time of travel or their mode of travel to carpooling, transit or active transportation. This would ease congestion for those who have to drive to get to work at a specific time and help avoid increased traffic on surface streets from drivers seeking to escape paying tolls.

Science is showing us the way: we need to act quickly (but thoughtfully) to reach carbon emission reductions of 50% by 2030 and net zero by 2050. The longer we postpone tackling these challenges, the harder it will be to reach them. All of our transportation planning, including implementation of tolls, must contribute to reducing the carbon we send into our shared atmosphere.

Finally, common sense tells me that we need a highly visible information campaign to explain how tolling, if planned right, can result in less driving and help us decrease climate pollution and the pace of global warming.

Let's make tolling decisions that help us meet or exceed Oregon's carbon reduction goals, increase equity in our transportation systems while also improving the health of those most impacted by fossil gases and particulate matter.

Thank you for your service to Oregon and for considering public testimony,

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