

**Speaker of the House, Dan Rayfield**

**"If I believe that there's a credible safety threat, then you've got to fund it,"**

**Oregon House Speaker Dan Rayfield said this in an interview.**

**"Safety on the road is paramount and that has to be done."**

In these highly inflationary times with greater than 60% of the public going paycheck to paycheck,

Tolling will result in 60% to 70% of the users of our roads, highways, bridges, and tunnels, to find alternative non-tolled routes, in their daily activities,

diverting to side-streets, secondary arterials, roads, highways and bridges without tolls, that do not have the capacity and/or safety built into or existing in their design,

making these diversion routes much less safe less for the public, than proposed roads, highways and bridges identified to be tolled which would be much safer for the public in their use.

**This proposed Tolling will result in greater numbers of accidents and deaths.**

Oregon blames declining gas tax revenues from more efficient cars and the wider adoption of electric vehicles, but virtual office employment has played role in reductions in movement and use of transit and in personal vehicle use. ODOT also infer structural funding issues that limit how federal and state highway money can be spent, but we all know that the greatest impacts are coming from inflation-driven cost increases.

It is equally about bureaucratic miss-management, staffing and far to high overhead, and lack of responsible prioritizations, that maximize "Return on Investment."

HB-2017 instituted a 2-cents per gallon annual gas tax increase that ends in year 2024. This gas tax increase should be continued, annually for ten more years, and it will result in greater than \$500 million plus, in new compounded annual revenues. It will also result in reductions in Carbon Emissions, and reduce "Vehicle Miles Driven" in non-electric vehicles.

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o achieve the same net revenue for transportation investment comparing annual revenues from Tolling to Gas Taxes, it would take close to \$2 Billion Dollars in Tolls Revenues taken from the public, to equal the same net revenue available to fund transportation priorities.

The inflationary impact of this proposed Tolling would be felt in every household and cause foreseeable price increases on everything and devastating harm to the general public and businesses, hurting those with lower incomes the most, with lost jobs, from and caused by major reductions in economic activity.

This Special Committee on Transportation must call for an in-depth and independent "Forensic Audit of ODOT", which is needed to determine, what needs to be done to right this ship!

General Funds, coming from income tax and business tax, augmented by enterprise zones for special projects tied to economic development and retention of jobs and employment, can also augment and include future State and Federal Grants that fund specific transportation infrastructure needs, to make what needs to be done happen.

There is a need to surgically reduce the overhead and the bureaucracy ODOT where funding is shifted to the field level staffing it takes to deliver actual projects on the ground.

Corporate World is right sizing everywhere, to contain costs with 15% to 30% reductions in staffing and reductions in office space. Artificial Intelligence, "AI" has enabled an ability to improve accuracy and quality of decision making with less staffing requirements. With Open AI, there has been improvements in the reductions in many of the errors that have hampered outcomes. Far to much of what ODOT presents and tells the public and local leadership can no-longer consider credible. Example is that there will be minimal diversion and little or no impacts and we all know that is wrong, it is purposely miss-leading. We have lost confidence in ODOT and their Critical Thinking and it is obvious that there is little or no quantifiable benefit analysis and Return on Investment in much of what they are recommending to be done.

You have to stop this run-away-train, of the ideologues and ODOT and that requires this independent, "Forensic Audit of ODOT". We have to take politics out of how decisions are being made on Tolling. Is this the Oregon Way, does it have justifiable "Benefit Analysis and Return on Investment" and if it does not the citizens and voters will change the landscape of those who holds office and makes the decisions.

Paul O. Edgar