

**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, finding 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 to use, than proposed to be Tolled; roads, highways and bridges that are acknowledged to be much safer, in their use.

**It is incontestable, Tolling will result in greater numbers of accidents and deaths on alternative routes taken to avoid Tolls.**

Oregon blames declining gas tax revenues from more efficient cars and the wider adoption of electric vehicles, but virtual office employment has played a significant role in reductions in movement and use of transit and in personal vehicle. 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 in ODOT, staffing and far to high overhead, with a lack of responsible prioritizations, that maximizes "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.

To achieve the same net revenue for transportation investments, there is a need to compare annual revenues potential from Tolling to Gas Tax. It would take close to \$2 Billion Dollars in Toll Revenues, to equal the same net revenue gained from Gas Tax, that would become available to fund transportation priorities.

However, the inflationary impact of this proposed Tolling would be far reaching and felt with devastating impacts in every household and cause foreseeable price increases on everything and harm to the general public and businesses alike, and hurting those with lower incomes the most, with lost jobs, 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 their ship!

Better options for transportation funding are, General Funds - income tax and business taxes, enterprise zones tied directly to economic development and State and Federal Grants specific transportation infrastructure needs.

There is a need to surgically reduce the cost of overhead within ODOT bureaucracy, where funding is shifted to the field level staffing needed to deliver actual projects on the ground.

We see in the "Corporate World", right sizing everywhere. There may well also be a need to contain costs in ODOT with reductions in staffing and office space. There is a major concern in what ODOT tells and presents to the public and local leadership and far to much is no-longer consider credible. Examples of that are where they infer that diversion will be minimal with little or no impacts and we all know that is miss-representation. What ODOT has been doing is purposefully miss-leading. This loss of confidence in ODOT and their Critical Thinking is obvious, when it is easy to determine that there is little or no quantifiable benefit analysis and Return on Investment in much of

what they are recommending in Tolling, like with the I-205 Abernethy Bridge project and without cost justifying the devastating effects of diversion will have on people and the economy.

We have to stop this run-away-train of miss-representation, and require a "Forensic Audit of ODOT". We have to take politics out of how decisions are being made. **Tolling is not justifiable, and has no positive "Benefit Analysis, Return on Investment and Public Safety is Compromised".** Voters will have the last word and will change the landscape of those who holds office and makes these tolling decisions, it also makes the need to have IP-4, Vote Before Tolls, Initiative Petition on the ballot.

***Paul O. Edgar, Oregon City***