

Submitter: Alma Nelson
On Behalf Of: myself
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation
Measure: HB2137

Dear Joint Committee on Transportation:

Although there have been studies done in the past and the bills for putting another bridge across the Willamette have been considered and rejected as feasible at that time, there are additional things to consider I feel at this time and juncture.

1) If there is a problem with the existing bridges linking West Salem and Salem due to an accident, a vehicle fire or large truck overturned, it is a minimum of 13 miles and a single lane road through Independence from W. Salem to then cross the river, or a shorter distance for traffic coming from Salem to Polk County. In some instances, this could delay having access to crossing the bridge for several days should something of a major happening occur. We have been fortunate so far in not having anything of this major of an issue happen. What are the odds for this to never happen I wonder. Can you please address this?

2) There are Veterans that live in Polk County that could need access to getting to the only VA Hospital which happens to be up in Portland, and should an emergency happen and they could not get the care that they need, what are their options then?

3) I do sympathize with those folks who are concerned about further emissions from vehicles by putting a new bridge structure up, however, putting another bridge up where it is even more accessible for those people who might actually live closer to that bridge could lower the emissions, not make them greater!

4) There is always the comments on the actual area / land where the bridge would be built, the homes, businesses, etc that would need to be changed moved in order for the new bridge to be built, and I feel that this is important to get public input on this, but to also consider the effect of delaying this whole process for the many more years like has been happening since 2006, thus more things get built and would need to be relocated etc. This only adds further fuel to those that oppose it, vs looking at how some of this could have been negated way back in 2006 had it moved forward then.

5) There is federal money allocated for infrastructure such as this, so the total bill for building a bridge may not be wholly on our taxes or costs as private or businesses to pay for it.

6) As more and more homes and businesses are being built on both sides of the Willamette River, it seems only fair that the need for another bridge should be a high priority and not be just a divisive political party one against the other, but something that would enhance our area and make for better relations among all people in the Willamette valley.

I'm sure that folks that live on the east side of the river would not want to have to travel a greater distance to get down to the seashore should something happen to the east bound lanes that would cause delays of greater time or even days to be remedied..... how would they feel about this then?

This bill is only to "pass for a task force" to review and help make a proposal for going forward further. Please take into account the many pros being put forth in letters and testimony and stop making it a political juggernaut.

Thank you in advance for reading my letter.
Sincerely, Alma Nelson