

Submitter: Jonathan Greenwood
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation
Measure: HB2098

Hello,

I support replacing this bridge, but oppose HB 2098 -2, because this legislation as currently written jeopardizes a right-sized Bridge Replacement, right now. I support the forthcoming -3 Amendment (and the policy recommendations offered by the Just Crossing Alliance) that ensures this replacement bridge project moves forward smoothly with explicit pro-labor provisions, finance guardrails, and major investments in mass transit.

I want to say I strongly support a smaller bridge with MAX included. I am frustrated that ODOT uses funds for expanding freeways while ignoring safety concerns on our roads. Why has so little money been spent on making our streets safer for pedestrians and bikers? I am surprised to see that HB 2098's -2 Amendment currently has no language in support of unionized labor-friendly practices including the required establishment of a Project Labor Agreement or Community Benefits Agreement. Further, the drive to widen freeways in the Rose Quarter and across the Columbia is going to be disastrous for our communities. Induced demand means that adding lanes will not solve congestion or pollution caused by cars on these freeways. I am terrified of the climate emergency and frustrated that ODOT wants to spend billions on a freeway that will increase emissions instead of investing in better local and statewide transit options, when 40% of Oregon's carbon emissions come from transportation. I am angry that ODOT's projects are seemingly always significantly over budget, and concerned that this bloated freeway expansion will rob Oregonians of the desperately needed funding for basic maintenance and safety projects on ODOT roads across the state. I am worried about the state spending \$7 billion dollars on a singular seismic retrofit when ODOT's own studies report that Oregon has over 700 seismically vulnerable bridges across the state that need to be replaced. Again, I am baffled that policymakers still don't seem to understand the basic principles of induced demand and seem dead set on spending billions of dollars to learn that adding lanes to freeways only leads to more traffic jams. It is disturbing ODOT is defiantly disinterested in studying potentially-significantly-cheaper options like a tunnel under the river or a lift-bridge that would save billions of dollars. I am concerned that HB 2098 uses General Fund resources to pay for a new bridge instead of bonding against existing Highway Trust Fund dollars, a maneuver that directly pits this bridge project against other statewide budget priorities like investing in affordable housing or education. I am a transit-dependent Oregonian frustrated that the state isn't prioritizing investments in passenger rail, basic bus service, and other ways to get around for the 1 in 4 Oregonians who can't or don't drive.

I know that ODOT will claim the IBR isn't a widening project, but if that's the case why are they proposing it to be wide enough to support more lanes of traffic. I sincerely do not trust this organization to do what is right for our state. We need this money to go toward public transit and bike/walk infrastructure, not freeway widening! Please heed my opposition.

Thank you,
Jonathan Greenwood