

Submitter: David Pedersen
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation
Measure: HB2098

?? DISCLAIMER STATEMENT: as of the time of this submission, I remain blocked by the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) on Facebook for reasons which remain unbeknownst to me ??

I support replacing the I-5 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-labour provisions, finance guardrails, and major investments in mass transit.

I am concerned and frustrated that the ODOT continues to pour money into futile freeway expansions while investing comparatively little into making transportation safer, cleaner, and more accessible for everyone. Jevons' Paradox clearly shows that freeway widening DOES NOT WORK; indeed, being dependent (and perpetuating dependence) on low-capacity forms of transportation - namely cars and trucks - is an economic dead-end and carries devastating consequences for nearby communities, wildlife, water quality, and - in the case of internal-combustion engine vehicles - the climate.

I am also alarmed that HB 2098 Amendment 2 has no language in support of unionized labour-friendly practices including the required establishment of a Project Labour Agreement or Community Benefits Agreement - something that my province of British Columbia (BC) has had for quite some time now to great avail. We should seize every opportunity to protect and strengthen unionized labour, and this is no exception.

Lastly, I am concerned that ODOT's insistence on a fixed high-level bridge ignores cheaper alternatives, namely a tunnel crossing. The George Massey Tunnel in Metro Vancouver BC has been successful for many decades and shows that a bridge isn't always the best option, especially when marine traffic imposes height concerns (as is the case with the stretch-in-question of the Columbia River). A lift bridge should, for obvious reasons, be excluded from design alternatives; additionally, a tunnel would also clear up space along the riverfront that could be used for green space, restaurants, walking/cycling trails, and so on. A lift bridge would also negatively impact high-speed rail by interrupting the service during bridge lifts and lowerings.

Please do not move this bill along the legislative path until it is fixed to 1) prioritize

walking, cycling, and public transit (including electric light and/or high-speed rail) over road expansions and 2) include an explicit provision forbidding the selection of any design alternative that includes one or more movable sections.

Thank you.