

Submitter: John Russell
On Behalf Of: myself
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation
Measure: HB2098

Of course I'm in favor of replacing the bridge, but I do have concerns that the language in the bill could be misconstrued to be a blank check for ODOT to issue bonds and even to start construction. There is recent precedent for that, as I suspect you know.

I served on the Oregon Transportation Commission for eight rewarding years, so I think I know how ODOT works. My advice is to be cautious about anything that approaches a blank check. Raiding the general fund, using the unique Federal flexible funds that we used to so jealously guard (because they are the only non-gas tax funds that are free of the constitutional highway limitation), permitting borrowing authority, relying on expense caps that can't be enforced Without care we may be in quicksand.

Aside from this bill, I have concerns about the design. I don't think the team was truthful about the height issues with lift or bascule bridges that are the norm in America. They stated that there's an issue with the flight patterns from Pearson Air Park, which is not the case.