

April 27, 2023

Paxton Rothwell  
Portland, OR 97212

Oregon Joint Committee on Transportation  
RE: Reject HB 2098-2

Dear Co-Chair Frederick, Co-Chair Mc Clain, Co-Vice Chair Boquist, Co-Vice Chair Boshart-Davis, and other members of the Committee,

My name is Paxton Rothwell and I live in Northeast Portland in Senator Frederick's district. I am vehemently opposed to the language in the -2 amendment that will allow ODOT to begin financing the Rose Quarter, Interstate Bridge Replacement, and other freeway expansion projects in Portland Metro. If you care about the climate, the fiscal solvency of our state, or holding this run-away state agency accountable, you should reject this bill and ask ODOT for more options and phased options for these projects.

I am not opposed to the need to replace the I-5 bridge. The bridge spans are old and seismically vulnerable. I support the recommendations of the Just Crossing Alliance to replace this bridge with a right sized bridge right now. I believe that ODOT and the IBR team did not fully study alternatives to their proposed design and are coupling the bridge replacement with a massive freeway expansion project, which is unnecessary.

Congestion is caused by too many drivers on the road at the same time. It's not a system that can be fixed by increasing capacity. It can only be fixed by decreasing demand. I encourage you to add language to this bill that calls for *immediate* implementation of tolling on all of Portland Metro's freeways. Freeways are a misnomer - they are not free to maintain. The gas tax does not go far enough to pay for their maintenance either. So every year general funds that could have been used for schooling, healthcare, housing, or public transit are used to subsidize drivers using our roadway system. This socialism for cars needs to stop, today.

As written, HB 2098 doubles down on this socialism for cars and their drivers. It ties up general funds into freeway infrastructure projects that are ballooning in budget, being sold to community members as social or climate justice, and will be paid for by future Oregonians who will live in a harsher climate made possible due to the driving addiction these projects seek to perpetuate.

Can you find the courage to pass laws that actually make the world more walkable, transit friendly, and bikeable? Can you pass laws that charge vehicle owners registration fees proportional to the size and weight of their vehicle? Can you pass laws that fund expanded and fareless public transit throughout the State? Can you pass laws that help people get around safely who don't own and operate a car, like myself?

Find the courage, legislators. Because we need courageous leaders, not just people who will keep doing the same things that created this inequitable world we live in.

Thank you,  
Paxton Rothwell