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On Behalf Of:
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Measure: HB2098

There are many reasons tolls are not a good solution to traffic congestion or highway improvement.

Tolls are Unfair: Tolls have been touted to shift traffic out of the busiest (commute) times and reduce congestion. This works fine for workers with flex time. These are usually higher paid workers. However, lower income workers don't have that luxury. If you are earning six figures plus, you can work on your schedule. If you work for Walmart, you work on Walmart's schedule. So one person avoids the higher tolls and the other can't. While I have read that "we will have to look at how to deal with this", I have yet to hear any specifics of how relief is going to be provided. What criteria will be used? How will people apply for relief? Who will decide? Will we need another costly bureaucracy to administer this program?

Tolls are Uneconomical; How will the toll be assessed? Will the toll be based on license plate number? If so, how will tolls be billed? Paper bills are extremely uneconomical in cost of paper, printing, mailing, and receiving payment. Credit cards and bank account debits only work for those who have cards and/or bank accounts. Many do not. How will out-of-state be handled? How will those who don't pay be dealt with? How will cheaters (illegible license plates, fake temp tags, etc.) be detected? ODOT has provided few details.

Tolls are inefficient: Given all the operational issues and cost associated with tolls, would it not be simpler to use the two current revenue sources, fuel tax and registrations? A higher fuel tax would help with climate goals by incenting people to move to smaller and/or electric vehicles. A weight-based vehicle registration fee, where heavier vehicles pay more, would move toward the same goals. These could be accomplished without the large expenditures for tolling equipment, administration, and billing.

Tolls do not "solve" traffic congestion, they shift it.: There is already substantial traffic through Canby of people who avoid congestion on 205 between Oregon City and Wilsonville. Due to the large number of stoplights on 99E, most of this diversion traffic uses residential streets, Knightsbridge Rd., Birch St, and Territorial Rd., the same streets where kids walk to school. Based on the information available, it seems ODOT thinks that better marked crosswalks and bump-outs on 99E will solve this problem in Canby. ODOT has not looked nearly deep enough at what is really going on to have addressed this problem. This is not the only place where tolling will shift traffic from the highway to already dangerous overcrowded streets. Shift the

problem, and costs, from ODOT to the counties and cities. The only comment I have read about this is that ODOT is “aware” of this problem. Until ODOT tells the public exactly how they propose to deal with this issue, tolls are not a solution.

Why is Clackamas County the lab rat for tolls? It seems the little positive comment I have heard on tolling comes from politicians from Portland. If progressive, “cars are so last century” Portland likes tolls, let Portland be the test case and deal with the diversion problem. Leave others out until we see what the actual consequences of tolling are.

Don’t think tolling is going to stop in Portland. Or Clackamas. If ODOT makes money in the initial implementation, tolling will not end there. Border to border tolls? Lots of states have them. Why not Oregon? Traffic congestion in Bend or Medford? Toll it! If we let the horse out of the barn, tolling will soon come to a highway near you.

Tolls are Unpopular: Other than some legislators, I have not talked with anybody who likes tolls. While the legal definition of tolls in Oregon is a fee, the practical view is that tolls are a tax that the public was not allowed to vote on that will have dubious benefit to the people. Why force tolls on a public who doesn’t want them? Let the public decide. Let us vote.

Thank you.