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On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Interim Committee On Transportation
Funding

Measure, Appointment or
Topic: LC 2

The email I'd sent recently to my Rep. (Cyrus Javadi), about this topic (edited).
I vote Democrat;

",,,my priorities regarding your upcoming special session to deal with Transportation.

- As far as how folks in your district are directly affected by ODOT - one great example is waking-up one day in 2023 to find that our public transportation had completely stopped running, without warning.

This had a huge-impact on all of us.

Once we learned what had transpired, it was clear that the shutdown could have been prevented if ODOT had been doing their routine audits of our transit agency (to refresh your memory, there turned out to be serious fiscal "mismanagement" issues at our transit agency. These problems had not been identified & dealt with because of several years without ODOT audits being performed, which should have caught the transit agency's mismanagement).

At the very least, local folks would have been warned of some level of shortfalls so they could try to prepare for cuts to services.

It added insult to injury that local transit officials & ODOT didn't step-up with an explanation of what had happened.

Clearly, neither agency was going to readily admit their culpability.

This needs to *never* happen again - are ODOT's audits being performed again, on a realistic schedule-? Is any person or agency outside of ODOT ensuring that ODOT is doing them-? (Finding that information online is daunting, FYI.)

- As far as new projects and ODOT prioritizing spending, throughout the state -

The proposed Rose Quarter project needs to be killed, full-stop.

Obviously I-5 needs to better accommodate traffic through there, but that entire proposal - "capping" & tolling the freeways, selling it to Portlanders as something that will magically "bring back the Albina district", etc. - is ridiculous.

It's clearly for the benefit of the future Blazer owners & real estate developers, not drivers & nearby residents/businesses.

The ongoing uncertainty surrounding any Federal money should be enough to put

any such project on hold, at the very least.

And the Transportation spending that would be required to accommodate a new baseball stadium in downtown Portland was not mentioned in any coverage about it, ODOT should have been ordered by the Legislature to provide a realistic figure of what new infrastructure would cost taxpayers to prepare to move that number of people in & out of there, for every game / event.

- Besides the (legit) complaints about potholes, sinkholes, slides, etc. along our state roads, we need to have a much better focus on our aging bridges.

The (above mentioned, for example) fiscal mismanagement causes the public's distrust of ODOT's spending & practices, which has led to delays in bridge upgrades & replacements, as seen in the Columbia River Crossing situation. It puts all Oregonians at risk.

- *NO TOLLS on any public roads!

I don't think the public will stand for it, which is why our Governor has, for now, backed-off from that plan.

We all already pay multiple layers of funding through local & State gas taxes, transportation taxes, licensing fees, etc., this system did used to fully-fund our infrastructure.

I find that both Leftists & folks on the Right agree on opposition to the tolling issue (for our own reasons).

A (guaranteed-to-be-)-temporary toll on a bridge may be an option, to get it built. Ask Rep. Javadi about how that worked to get the Megler (Astoria) bridge built in our Conservative / working-class district, The tolls ended when the bridge was paid for.

- One more important point - Lower-income drivers, especially out here in areas where public transportation is limited, must be considered & exempted from any increase in fees (this is easily manageable without cumbersome bureaucracy - anyone who receives SNAP benefits has already been thoroughly-vetted by the State, that can easily be used to identify who qualifies for lower vehicle fees)."

Thank you,