

Dear Joint Transportation Committee on Preservation and Modernization,

I would like to voice my strong opposition to the massive boost in spending on highway expansion in the draft HB 2017. In particular, spending \$1.1 billion dollars on freeway "mega" projects in the Portland area will not reduce congestion (see summary on induced demand below), is contrary to the state's climate change goals, and will negatively impact the transportation options of marginalized communities. Moreover, the allocation of so much new revenue to unneeded 1950s era transportation infrastructure when healthcare, education, and housing spending is being sharply cut is unacceptable. I call on the committee to amend HB 2017 to shift the bulk of spending towards mass transit and active transportation infrastructure. I strongly support the transit payroll tax but believe the ~107 million per year is insufficient and would like to see additional state funding of mass transit.

In addition to the concerns outlined above, I object to the manner in which these "mega" projects were selected by committees with little Portland area representation. Portland metro residents, marginalized communities, and local organizations deserve a strong voice in the selection and development of the transportation network running through our neighborhoods. Spending half a billion dollars on transportation infrastructure that will largely benefit wealthier highway users while outer Portland neighborhoods suffer from decades of infrastructure neglect is a major step backwards.

I also call on the committee to amend the bill to remove the punitive taxes and fees on electric vehicles and bicycles. If we are going to see progress towards a modern and cleaner transportation network we need to incentivize choices that move us towards a sustainable transportation system. These punitive taxes and fees could be replaced with a tax on studded tires which are a major contributor to increased highway maintenance costs.

### **On highway lane expansions and induced demand:**

Encouraging more people to drive (induced demand) is a huge step backwards when it comes to fighting climate change. For example, the Oregon Global Warming

Commission recently reported that increased driving is causing us to miss our climate change goals:

As the updated greenhouse gas inventory data clearly indicate, Oregon's emissions had been declining or holding relatively steady through 2014 but recorded a non-trivial increase between 2014 and 2015. The majority of this increase (60%) was due to increased emissions from the transportation sector, specifically the use of gasoline and diesel. The reversal of the recent trend in emissions declines, both in the transportation sector and statewide, likely means that Oregon will not meet its 2020 emission reduction goal.

Moreover, as economist Joe Cortright notes the idea that "fixing bottlenecks" by widening freeways does not encourage driving has proven to be fallacious time and time again:

The new word of the day is bottleneck: Supposedly, adding a lane or two in a few key locations will magically remedy traffic congestion. But the evidence is always that when you "fix" one bottleneck, the road simply gets jammed up at the next one. As the Frontier Group has chronicled, the nation is replete with examples of billion dollar boondoggle highways that have been sold on overstated traffic projections, and which have done little or nothing to reduce congestion.

As we all know, widening freeways to reduce traffic congestion has been a spectacular failure everywhere its been tried. From the epic 23-lanes of the Katy Freeway, to the billion dollar Sepulveda Pass in Los Angeles, adding more capacity simply generates more traffic, which quickly produces the same or even longer of delays. The case for what is called induced demand is now so well established that its now referred to as "The Fundamental Law of Road Congestion."

<http://cityobservatory.org/happy-earth-day-oregon-lets-widen-some-freeways/>

A link to a report that details some of the evidence that "fixing bottlenecks" induces additional driving and contributes to further neglect of our transportation priorities:

<http://frontiergroup.org/reports/fg/highway-boondoggles-3>

Best regards,

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