

Good Afternoon,

I am writing regarding the recently released Oregon transportation bill. I have some concerns regarding some of the mega-highway projects on the list, particularly the I-5 widening in the area of the Rose Quarter section of Portland. This project, costing roughly \$500 million, is well-intentioned, but I feel that the investment is not the best use of limited funds.

I have three reasons for this belief:

1) While fender benders do sometimes occur in this portion of I-5, roadway deaths have not occurred here in recent memory. Meanwhile, we have had several deaths in Portland along pedestrian laden arterials such as 82nd Avenue and outer Division Street.

2) Induced demand. Whatever benefits would be gained by alleviating a bottleneck will be short lived. When driving is cheap, the only thing that deters more driving is congestion. If capacity is increased, this new space will quickly fill up with drivers that are glad that traffic is not quite as bad as it once was. If only this benefit could last. By looking to places like southern California and cities throughout Texas, we know that traffic projections never hold true. A highway expansion that we think will solve our problems for the next 20 years often surpasses acceptable congestion levels within five years or less!

3) We can get a better bang for our buck by investing in projects that will result in more people choosing to get around by biking, walking, and transit. One example of this is the Hawthorne bridge. Compared to 20 years ago, the Hawthorne Bridge now carries thousands more people per day than it once did. Yet automobile congestion has remained flat. The reason for this is that the sidewalk portion of the bridge was widened, resulting in an explosion in the number of people choosing to bike into downtown.

Intuitively, people want to widen roadways wherever there is congestion. Unfortunately, the elements behind traffic congestion are counter-intuitive. Let's not make the same mistakes that California and Texas have made.

Thank you for your time.

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