



March 2, 2022

The Honorable Ron Wyden
221 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
531 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Suzanne Bonamici
2231 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Cliff Bentz
1239 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Earl Blumenauer
1111 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
2134 Rayburn Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kurt Schrader
2431 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

[Sent electronically via email]

Subject: Clackamas County Legislators Request Assistance with I-205 Tolling Concerns

Dear Members of the Oregon Congressional Delegation,

As bipartisan, bicameral members of the Oregon Legislature representing districts located in Clackamas County, we are writing to raise our serious concerns about the Oregon Department of Transportation's (ODOT) current proposal to exclusively toll I-205 ahead of the rest of the Portland metro region – and to respectfully ask for your help and support to elevate our concerns with the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC), ODOT, and other relevant stakeholders so we can reach a meaningful solution for Oregonians.

The current proposal for tolling I-205 will lead to more local traffic congestion, reduced road safety, and increased costs to everyday Oregonians; it is fundamentally unfair to our constituents and local businesses, and it will not help create the regional tolling program that OTC aims to establish. For these reasons we are united in our opposition to the current I-205 tolling plan.

This plan will divert more vehicles from I-205 onto our local streets, generating significant traffic and safety problems at a time when our towns and neighborhoods are already experiencing substantial population

growth and local congestion. We are especially concerned for the reduced safety of families with young children, seniors, and those with disabilities. Our local roads and infrastructure, which already experience significant diversion, simply will not be able to handle the additional influx of traffic from I-205 when it is exclusively tolled.

To be clear, there are no transportation alternatives for drivers that want or need to avoid a toll along I-205 except to drive on local roads. Little to no transit exists along this corridor, and no meaningful plan has been proposed to address this gap. Additionally, many local residents will not have the benefit of altering their schedule to avoid peak-pricing proposed by ODOT. Drivers don't choose when their kids are dropped off at school, when they must show up for work, and when congestion happens around them.

Tolling I-205 can only be part of a larger, regional plan for improvements to transportation infrastructure and relief of congestion across the metro area. Unfortunately, that is not what is occurring here. Tolling local drivers who rely on I-205 for their everyday needs - when this project connects and benefits many parts of the region and state that will not have to shoulder the same cost - is fundamentally inequitable to those who live and work in Clackamas County. This plan will increase costs on everyday Oregonians at a time when inflation is already making life unaffordable for too many.

Our repeated requests for dialogue with the OTC have, so far, been ignored. We are now asking for your support and assistance in raising these issues with the OTC and helping us start a serious conversation around addressing them in a meaningful way.

Our concerns around the negative impacts to local traffic and safety – combined with the disproportionate financial burden placed upon our constituents and local businesses by this project – is a real problem that continues to go unaddressed by the OTC. Their failure to engage in a meaningful dialogue with us and those we represent to address these issues will undermine regional support for this plan and the Oregon Toll Program at-large. Said another way, if implementation of the I-205 toll program stumbles, it will create a lack of confidence in the effectiveness of regional tolling, potentially jeopardizing that project. The natural consequence in that scenario is that only I-205 is tolled for several decades. This scenario is unacceptable.

In addition to raising our specific concerns outlined above, we also plan to request the following of the OTC:

1. Create a formal structure to facilitate dialogue with impacted parties and jurisdictions (*Currently, the only mechanism for providing any feedback is to testify at OTC meetings*).
2. Delay tolling on I-205 until federal approval of regional tolling is secured.
3. A commitment to maintaining the current construction schedule for phase 1A (Abernethy Bridge improvements) of the I-205 Improvements Project.
4. A comprehensive financial report that provides transparency to project costs and funding sources.

We welcome the opportunity to work together with your office on elevating these very serious concerns. Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter and for any assistance you might be able to provide.

Sincerely,



Representative Mark Meek (Co-Chair)
House District 40



Representative Rick Lewis (Co-Chair)
House District 18



Representative Janelle Bynum
House District 51



Representative James Hieb
House District 39



Senator Kaye Jama
Senate District 24



Senator Bill Kennemer
Senate District 20



Representative Courtney Neron
House District 26



Representative Karin Power
House District 41



Representative Rachel Prusak
House District 37



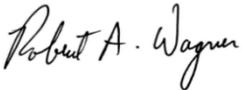
Representative Jeff Reardon
House District 48



Representative Andrea Salinas
House District 38



Senator Chuck Thomsen
Senate District 26



Senator Rob Wagner
Senate District 19



Representative Anna Williams
House District 52