



06/24/2021

**Timothy G. Sekerak**

**Chief Clerk of the House**

**State Capitol Building, H271**

**Salem, OR 97301**

RE: Vote Explanation on HB 3055

Dear Chief Clerk Sekerak,

On June 24th, 2021 I voted “Yes” on HB 3055, despite concerns I have with the environmental impact of funding freeway expansion, and the regressive fee structure of tolls. I wish to explain for the record why I chose to move forward with a supportive vote.

This bill is the result of a broad stakeholder process that has been ongoing for years and has the support of agencies and my district's broad community including Metro, Portland, Beaverton, Tigard and Hillsboro. It is an omnibus transportation bill which contains a wide variety of issues needing to be addressed for years including driver suspension hearings, odometer requirement specifications, jet-fuel provisions, railroad tax credits, and most importantly, provisions for congestion management and revenue generation to fund freeway capacity. I voted yes due to the complicated nature of the bill addressing safety, maintenance, modernization and full-system action as well as the principles of collaborative policy building across all levels of government and with the public that incorporated compromise and innovative policy-making.

As dozens of constituents have reminded me, our present climate emergency and years of failed freeway-expansion policies should commit us to new approaches for congestion management and urban renewal programs aimed at alternative and equitable transportation methods and mending the damage done by interstate highways to BIPOC neighborhoods in the post-war decades. I agree.

Hence, my “Yes” vote on this bill is heavily conditioned on assurance I’ve received from Representative McLain and agencies that the following policy goals are concomitant to HB 3055:

1. A walkable freeway “cap” will be funded through partnerships by the state, Multnomah county and the city of Portland to cover the Rose Quarter expansion and will reconnect the Albina neighborhood.

After the passage of the 1949 Housing Act and the 1956 Interstate Highway Act, numerous BIPOC neighborhoods across American cities were gutted or cut off from civic centers and city amenities by freeways. This is a widely studied phenomenon with 40 years of research behind it<sup>1</sup>. Egregious examples include some of the neighborhoods around the Rose Quarter, including the Mississippi and Albina neighborhoods in Portland, perforated by the I-5. Low-income and communities of color along the freeway corridor suffer disproportionately from the adverse health impacts of diesel and other car-related fumes, decreased green space and lack of walkability in their neighborhood where they have been cut off from many services due to freeway-related barriers. To mend some of this damage, a corridor “cap” is absolutely needed and will continue to be the desired outcome to be collaboratively developed and funded by stakeholders moving forward.

2. Infrastructure investment will be principally aimed at reducing cars on our roads, and not merely accommodating more cars. Congestion pricing development will be a priority and tolling will not be the final and sole mechanism for funding road maintenance.

Between 1993 and 2017, the nation’s largest 100 urban areas added 30,511 new lane-miles of roads--a 42 percent increase. That’s higher than population growth, which was 32 percent in those metros over the same time period. Yet, traffic congestion, as measured in annual hours of delay, actually rose during those 24 years, by a staggering 144 percent<sup>2</sup>.

Studies do however show that robust, long-term regional investment in transit infrastructure aimed at managing demand on existing infrastructure does however reduce congestion. Recently, for example, the Seattle Metro Area adopted long-term regional investments in transit infrastructure that includes light rail systems and bus networks through the Seattle Transportation Benefit District (STBD) funding scheme. It has seen significant results, including a decrease in car-traffic and mass-transit ridership increases of 89 percent<sup>3</sup>.

In this unusual year of paradigm shifts in the way people work, and increased federal spending, and a looming climate crisis, bold, 21st century solutions are justified. I hope HB 3055 keeps sight of principles centered around equity, and modernization of infrastructure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maxine Dexter', with a blue ink scribble above it.

Representative Maxine Dexter, M.D.  
House District 33 (NW Portland and NE Washington County)

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<sup>1</sup> Leibbrand C, Massey C, Alexander JT, Genadek KR, Tolnay S. The Great Migration and Residential Segregation in American Cities during the Twentieth Century. *Soc Sci Hist.* 2020;44(1):19-55. doi:10.1017/ssh.2019.46

<sup>2</sup> Kent Hymel, If you build it, they will drive: Measuring induced demand for vehicle travel in urban areas, *Transport Policy*, Volume 76, 2019, Pages 57-66, ISSN 0967-070X, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tranpol.2018.12.006>. (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967070X18301720>)

<sup>3</sup> Seattle Department of Transportation All Aboard Annual Report, Fall 2018