

# State Representative Kim Thatcher (R-Keizer)



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## *Thatcher Wants Brakes Put on Corridor Tolling*

(Salem) “We need to put the brakes on this funding scheme before it goes too far, jeopardizing the project as a whole,” wrote State Representative Kim Thatcher (R-Keizer) in testimony submitted to the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) today. At the [Commission’s meeting in Grants Pass](#) this week they will be discussing tolling policies, including the proposed [Newberg-Dundee Bypass](#).

Thatcher is troubled by plans to [put tolls on the existing roadway](#), 99W from Newberg to McMinnville in addition to the new bypass. “This is unacceptable and was never part of the discussion in the early days of this Bypass concept,” said Thatcher. “And why toll a road that’s already paid for?”

The 11-mile bypass could cost more than \$400 million. It’s designed to [relieve gridlock](#) on 99W through Newberg, Dundee and Dayton which has a traffic count of more than 35,000 cars each day. That number is expected to double in the next two decades.

Thatcher understands there is some concern about motorists using the old route in order to avoid paying a toll on the new road. However, she added, “local governments like the [Dundee and Newberg City Councils](#) have both expressed their opposition to this idea of ‘corridor tolling’, as have [several merchants in the area](#).”

Another concern for Thatcher is the new movement to rely on tolling to [pay for the entire project](#). She pointed out, “when the Oregon Legislature created the mechanism for [‘public-private partnerships’](#) it meant the Oregon Department of Transportation would pay its fair share and not shift the entire burden onto motorists paying the tolls.” Thatcher pleaded unsuccessfully with the [OTC last December](#) to use part of a windfall of federal money to help fund the bypass.

“As State Representative for this region, please add my name to the [growing list of people](#) who are upset with the path ODOT is taking on tolling policies,” Thatcher said. She served on the House Transportation Committee last legislative session, [helped pass a bill](#) to increase state funding for the Newberg-Dundee Bypass, and she has worked in the transportation industry for the past 20 years.

Thatcher is very involved with local groups working to make the bypass project a success including the [Oregon Transportation Improvement Group](#) (OTIG). She told the Commission, “I am willing to work with ODOT to develop other [funding alternatives](#) and reduce the cost of the project.” The bypass has been discussed for the past 20 years and in 2002 it was listed among the few “Projects of Statewide Significance” which deserve state funding. To learn more about the project and comment on the tolling policies go to [www.newbergdundeebypass.org](#)

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