

KHANH PHAM
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 46



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

November 18, 2021

Metro Council
600 NE Grand Ave.
Portland, OR 97232

Re: MTIP funding for ODOT's Interstate Bridge Replacement Program

Dear Council president and members of council:

As an Oregon State Legislator and transportation justice advocate, I write to urge Metro Council to reconsider your investment in the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP) relating to the Interstate Bridge Replacement project.

Metro can table the proposed amendment and withhold \$36 million from the Interstate Bridge Replacement project until ODOT pledges to study the full range of options to ensure that we are considering the most green, equitable, and affordable actions. I believe this is the right course of action.

Given the failures from the Columbia River Crossing project of last decade, the heightened awareness of local impacts from climate change that has devastated our region and state in successive years, and the need to invest in local roads and orphan highways that have suffered from decades of under-investment, I believe more due diligence is needed before further dollars are invested in this current bridge project. I have concerns that there are other more cost-effective ways we can address congestion on the I-5 Bridge that have not been explored thoroughly.

We need to be careful stewards of public dollars. Our state's precious resources, including Metro's dollars and incoming Congressional infrastructure funds, could be contributing towards building a true seismically-safe replacement for the existing bridge that invests in better transportation options across the Columbia River and congestion pricing that prioritizes minimizing traffic, not maximizing revenue. Our constituents in the region are looking for bold leadership to accept a much wider range of alternatives that can connect communities together, provide transportation and economic benefits, while not increasing greenhouse gas emissions.

At this point, without further exploration of the alternatives, I believe it would be a mistake to greenlight \$36 million for planning and preliminary engineering for the Interstate Bridge Replacement project. Before committing more public resources to this project, ODOT needs to study if there are cheaper, greener, more equitable, and less controversial options and at least present them for consideration.

As a legislator, I've deeply appreciated partnership with Metro, and I know that we share the same commitment to improving our regional transportation network and stewarding our transportation and infrastructure dollars wisely. I have seen firsthand what the power of collaboration can achieve with our work on 82nd avenue jurisdictional transfer, and I have faith that our state and local governments can deliver for our constituents when we make meaningful investments in bold strategies to tackle our climate and transportation future.

I stand ready to partner with you and your offices in shaping the metro region for current and future Oregonians to come. It is important that we embrace that leadership and piece by piece, build a future that every Oregonian deserves.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Khanh Pham".

Representative Khanh Pham, HD 46