

JAIME HERRERA BEUTLER  
3RD DISTRICT, SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON

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August 25, 2021

Director Kris Strickler  
Oregon Department of Transportation  
355 Capitol St, NE MS 11  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Director Strickler,

I write to echo the concerns expressed by members of the Vancouver City Council at the meeting held on August 9th, and to ask for answers and clarification. I find it particularly troubling that the tolling proposals presented to the Council seem to expressly target Southwest Washington residents while providing them with few, if any, benefits. The worst off will be those hardworking residents who don't have the luxury of choosing to telecommute – they must be at their place of employment when the shop opens for business or the school bell rings.

According to media reports, Councilor Stober expressed concerns about the motives behind the Oregon tolling plan when he pointed out that a disproportionate share of the tolling burden will fall on the routes most used by Southwest Washington residents. I have made similar statements since the inception of the tolling plan, and I am deeply concerned that such an unfair system will not only inflict needless harm on Southwest Washington commuters but jeopardize cooperation between our two states on important future transportation priorities.

Councilors Paulsen and Hansen reportedly took issue with the unfairness of "congestion pricing" and the difficulties such a system causes for low-income workers, most of whom cannot be flexible when they commute. I have long contended that congestion pricing will amount to a deeply regressive tax, with the poor subsidizing the wealthy who are far more often able to adjust their commute times to lower-cost, lower-traffic periods.

Mayor McEnerney-Ogle reportedly spoke about the problems caused by Oregon's inability to share any of the tolling revenue with CTRAN despite CTRAN's crucial role in alleviating congestion. She's right.

A tolling program on I-5 and I-205, which specifically punishes Southwest Washington commuters while providing them with minimal infrastructure benefits, is neither an acceptable nor fair solution to the Portland region's myriad of transportation needs. Given that Portland has the eighth worst traffic congestion in the nation, have ODOT officials stated how much their

tolling efforts will actually reduce the time spent in traffic for Southwest Washington commuters?

I would appreciate your response to all of these concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jaime Herrera Beutler". The signature is written in a cursive style with a blue ink color.

Jaime Herrera Beutler  
Member of Congress