

JAIME HERRERA BEUTLER
3RD DISTRICT, SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND WATER
DEVELOPMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON LABOR, HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES, EDUCATION,
AND RELATED AGENCIES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES
AND GENERAL GOVERNMENT



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1602

□ 1107 LONGWORTH HOB
WASHINGTON D.C. 20515
(202) 225-3536

□ GENERAL O.O. HOWARD HOUSE
750 ANDERSON STREET, SUITE B
VANCOUVER, WA 98661
(360) 695-6292

WWW.JHB.HOUSE.GOV

December 1, 2017

Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council
Board of Directors
P.O. Box 1366
Vancouver, Washington 98666-1366

Dear RTC Board Members:

As you know, the Oregon Department of Transportation is currently developing a proposal to toll on I-5 and I-205 – vital roadways used by 74,000 Washington residents each day. During this planning phase, I urge the RTC Board to weigh in decisively on behalf of Southwest Washington to help prevent Oregon's proposal from imposing disproportionate and negative impacts on the thousands of Washingtonians who utilize our interstate highways every day.

The debate that led up to and passage of Oregon's tolling legislation, and Oregon's subsequent comments about its intentions for tolling, are undermining any serious bi-state effort to address the critical need for region-wide transportation improvements. I do not oppose the concept of a user fee paid by the users of a resource and allocated toward the construction or upkeep of that resource, but using tolls to price people out of their cars, or to pay for Oregon infrastructure miles away from our shared resources is something else – it's clearly a bad, unfair deal for Southwest Washington commuters.

I have heard strong concerns from an overwhelming number of community members over Oregon's tolling plans. The individuals I hear from are not confined to any one area of our region, or political ideology; they are commuters who don't have a choice in when or how often they commute to work to earn the money they need to pay their mortgages and buy groceries. If Washington's representative institutions like RTC stay silent while Oregon develops its tolling plan, please know that you risk eroding the trust of Southwest Washington residents and your subsequent ability to secure their support for future efforts on I-5 and throughout the corridor. Stepping forward to defend the interest of our community early in the process will go a long way toward strengthening that trust.

Now is the time for the RTC to weigh in with this process by sending Oregon a clear message that the RTC is looking out for the best interests of Southwest Washington, and that it opposes any tolling plan that would treat its stakeholders unfairly.

Sincerely,

Jaime Herrera Beutler