



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

February 18, 2020

Dear Speaker Kotek, President Courtney, and Chair Holvey,

We are writing to you today to request the attached amendment to HB 4017 be considered in the House Rules Committee. We believe that this legislation would solve critical transportation issues that are top priorities for the Oregon Transportation Commission. The concept presents a win-win opportunity that puts Oregonians to work, demonstrates fiscal responsibility, solves congestion and safety concerns of statewide importance on I-205, and gives stakeholders the opportunity to develop a robust and environmentally conscious plan on how to move forward with the Rose Quarter.

Currently, the I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project is earmarked for state bond funding, yet the project is years away from being 'construction-ready'. A proposed Environmental Impact Statement, coupled with public concern about equity and climate impacts, could push the project back even further.

Meanwhile, the I-205 Widening and Seismic Improvements Project, which would address bottleneck congestion, add rapid bus transit, and make the Abernethy Bridge earthquake-ready, is nearly 'shovel-ready'. Per ODOT, I-205 would likely be used as part of the traffic diversion plan when the Rose Quarter is under construction. If I-205 is not improved prior to this work, the added congestion in the bottleneck will lead to even more traffic diversion into communities and their local roads, thereby decreasing safety and increasing costs to those jurisdictions to maintain their infrastructure.

How we pay for the I-205 Project is also uncertain and with every year this project is delayed, we add an additional \$15 million to the project cost due to inflation. ODOT states the Oregon Legislature has directed them to use tolling revenue to pay for I-205 improvements. Yet estimates suggest tolling on I-205 is insufficient to cover total project costs, and additional revenue will be needed to complete the project. ODOT has made multiple unsuccessful attempts to lower the cost burden on the state by seeking roughly \$160 million in federal funding, with the strength of the grant application being hindered by a lack of state investment. We are requesting that the House Rules Committee consider the amendment to reallocate the HB 2017 funds dedicated to the Rose



Quarter Project to pay for the Abernethy Bridge and I-205 Project - prioritizing funding for a project of statewide significance that is ready to go. This would not increase new funding or take away from other projects that are already planned and contracted out by ODOT. It makes prudent fiscal sense to reprioritize state investments to 'construction-ready' projects.


Thank you for your consideration,



Representative Prusak



Representative Reardon



Representative Drazan



Senator Fagan



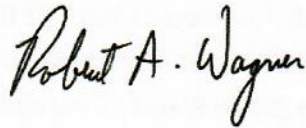
Senator Olsen



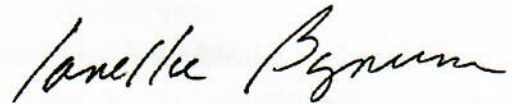
Senator Thatcher



Senator Thomsen



Senator Wagner



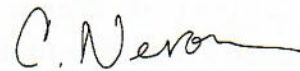
Representative Bynum



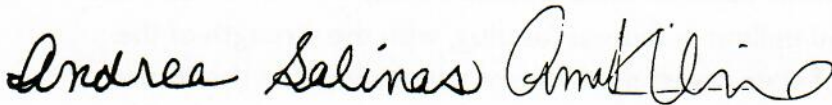
Representative Lewis



Representative Meek



Representative Neron



Representative Salinas



Representative Williams