



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Department of Transportation

Office of the Director

355 Capitol St NE

Salem, OR 97301

August 9, 2018

The Honorable Patty Murray
United States Senator
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Murray:

Thank you for your letter of August 1 regarding the Portland Area Value Pricing Feasibility Analysis and the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC)'s pricing application to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Governor Brown asked that we respond given that the Oregon Transportation Commission is tasked with implementation of value pricing.

We appreciate your continued constructive engagement in this conversation about our shared region's future. We can assure you that as this process moves forward, we will continue to operate in an open and transparent manner that considers the voices of Southwest Washington residents.

As you know, the OTC is developing a pricing proposal for consideration by the FHWA and is focused on addressing the Oregon State Legislature's direction through Oregon House Bill 2017. In particular, the OTC is developing a proposal that seeks to manage congestion on I-5 and I-205 and/or prices these freeways as a means to finance bottleneck relief projects. To that end, the OTC proposal will identify the location and type of pricing concepts that are most promising, and also mitigation strategies to lessen the unwanted impacts of tolling on environmental justice and adjacent communities. Managing the region's congestion is a critical issue for moving freight and people through Northwest Oregon and Southwest Washington.

Since November 2017, there has been a robust discussion about congestion pricing on I-5 and I-205 in the Portland metro area through extensive public outreach and the work of the Policy Advisory Committee (PAC). Many of the concerns of Washingtonians outlined in your letter were also heard during the PAC process, at public events and through other outreach, and are reflected in several of the PAC's recommendations. The PAC's deliberations benefited from representation drawn from a broad spectrum of interests, including key contributions from Washington state members. We very much appreciate their work on the PAC recommendation and look forward to more collaboration between the two states as a value pricing proposal moves forward into future phases of traffic, revenue and environmental analysis.

At the August meeting of the OTC, the assembled commissioners are expected to discuss the two initial projects recommended by the PAC:

1. A priced roadway on Interstate 5 between NE Going Street/Alberta Street and Multnomah Boulevard
2. Tolling on or near the Abernethy Bridge on Interstate 205

Additionally, the commissioners will discuss the mitigation priorities identified by the PAC:

- Improved public transportation and other transportation options are essential strategies for equity and mobility.
- Special provisions are needed for environmental justice populations, including low-income communities.
- Diversion strategies should be incorporated to minimize and mitigate negative impacts.

The OTC will be asked to accept the PAC recommendation and to provide direction to the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) on the above projects and mitigation strategies. This direction will assist ODOT in preparing a formal application to the FHWA by December 31, 2018 (as directed by HB 2017).

As you noted in your letter, a number of PAC members called for a more expansive tolling effort on Portland area highways. At its August meeting, the OTC will be asked to provide direction to ODOT staff about conducting a system-wide feasibility analysis of pricing the regional freeway system that includes OR 217, US 26, I-405, and Interstate 84, in addition to I-5 and I-205. If the OTC elects to proceed with such a feasibility analysis, ODOT would then develop an approach for the OTC to consider later this year. This preliminary feasibility analysis, should the OTC choose to advance it, will proceed separate and apart from the two initial projects and mitigation strategies listed above and will not be part of our application to FHWA. If advanced by the OTC, this broad system-wide study will seek cooperation and input from a wide array of stakeholders, including those in the state of Washington.

Thank you again for taking a constructive and proactive role in this process on behalf of your Southwest Washington constituents.

Sincerely,



Tammy Baney
Chair
Oregon Transportation Commission



Matthew L. Garrett
Director
Oregon Department of Transportation