

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4704

COMMITTEES:
APPROPRIATIONS
BUDGET
HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR,
AND PENSIONS
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

September 22, 2017

The Honorable Kate Brown
Governor
State of Oregon
Office of the Governor
900 Court Street, Suite 254
Salem, Oregon 97301-4047

Dear Governor Brown:

After closely following efforts by the Washington State Legislature to craft and pass the Connecting Washington transportation revenue package in 2015, I recognize the significance of the Oregon State Legislature's recent work to pass a comprehensive transportation package (HB 2017). There is no question that regions in Oregon and Washington are experiencing unprecedented growth which increases congestion, freight bottlenecks, and challenges in maintaining existing infrastructure. Since passage of HB 2017, I have heard from Washingtonians expressing concerns with the requirement to "implement value pricing to reduce traffic congestion" on I-205 and I-5 between the Washington state line and the intersection of these two interstate highways in Oregon. As the State of Oregon works to implement this provision, I urge you to conduct an open and transparent process to ensure voices on both sides of the Oregon-Washington border are heard and considered in any final recommendations.

I understand the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) has directed the Oregon Department of Transportation to establish the Portland Region Value Pricing Policy Advisory Committee (Committee) to evaluate potential value pricing opportunities on I-205 and I-5 in the greater Portland, Oregon area and provide recommendations to the OTC. Considering the strong cross-state economic and workforce relationship between the greater Vancouver, Washington and Portland areas, I believe it is important for the Committee to consider potential impacts to Washington state residents when evaluating alternatives and developing recommendations. In addition, the State of Washington has implemented tolling and value pricing as tools to help finance large infrastructure projects and address congestion, and the Committee could benefit from lessons learned by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and local governments, residents, and businesses in Washington state.

I appreciate that WSDOT and Clark County have been invited to serve on the Committee. This is an important first step. However, WSDOT was invited as an ex officio member without voting authorities. In order to ensure the interests of the State of Washington are fully represented, I respectfully request you make WSDOT a voting member of the Committee. Further, any recommendations developed by the Committee could have a direct impact on Southwest Washington residents, commuters, and businesses. Therefore, I also request that the City of Vancouver be added to the Committee as a voting member. These changes would provide three

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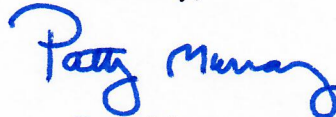
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distinct avenues through which the interests of Washington state and my constituents could be formally represented on the Committee. In addition, I urge you to ensure the Committee's process includes robust public comment opportunities to make sure a full perspective on the impacts to everyday commuters, businesses, the economy, and the environment in Washington is considered by the Committee.

Like you, I am committed to addressing our state and regional transportation challenges. I support making our roads, rails, bridges, and public transit safer, more efficient, and able to meet the demands of the 21st century economy. A significant part of this for the states of Oregon and Washington is a new I-5 crossing to replace the existing 100 year old bi-state bridge. We need a new bridge that is seismically sound; alleviates congestion; improves connectivity, transit, and freight movement; increases market access for businesses; and works for residents on both sides of the Columbia River. Any decision with respect to tolling or value pricing on the I-5 crossing should occur through a larger, regional conversation. Implementing such mechanisms through HB 2017 could jeopardize ongoing efforts to have a comprehensive discussion to ensure we address the region's transportation and economic needs through a new I-5 crossing.

Thank you for your consideration of my requests.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Patty Murray". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P" and a long, sweeping underline.

Patty Murray
United States Senator