

## **Petition looks to put potential I-205, I-5 tolls on the ballot for voters to decide**

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PORTLAND, Ore. — A new petition wants to put any plans for tolling on Interstate 5 and Interstate 205 to the voters.

The petition follows Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) proposals for tolls at the Abernethy Bridge, with the goal of making the bridge earthquake-safe.

There is also a toll project in development for tolls on I-5 and I-205 between Wilsonville and the Columbia River. ODOT says that funding will be used to reduce traffic congestion.

Voters in places like Oregon City are now pushing to weigh in on tolling during next year's election.

"We really should not be the two communities to take the brunt of this experiment that they are trying. So, if tolling is going to happen, if-and-when it happens and of course our two cities hope that it doesn't happen, everybody should take the cut," said Denyse McGriff, the mayor of Oregon City.

This week the Clackamas County Board of Commissioners voted to support that petition, which requires 200,000 signatures to end up on the ballot.

"The legislature and ODOT are not listening to people, they need to fix it. So, maybe if citizens are going to vote on it they'll get busy and start fixing the problem and look for alternate ways to fund our roads," said Chair Tootie Smith.

Drivers in West Linn said they're worried about traffic diverting off I-205 and into neighborhoods.

"The streets around the high school are mad crowded and Highway 43 gets pretty backed up sometimes, so I think if the tolls are put in place then those streets are just going to get more crowded because people aren't going to want to spend whatever it's going to be," said Teresa Bertrand.

Bill Dahl said he already signed the proposition. Dahl tells KATU he believes there should be a sunset clause to eliminate tolling once that work ends.

"It's just not right. There are other means within the state to collect money. We're not opposed to paying for improvements. They're expensive, we waited too long to do the infrastructure, but it's just the wrong way to do it," he said.

KATU shared these concerns with ODOT. Spokesperson Anna Howe responded with a statement:

"In 2017, Oregon passed an historic transportation package which identified tolling I-5 and I-205 as one tool to reduce regional congestion and raise revenue to improve our transportation infrastructure. Directed by House Bill 2017, which passed with broad, bipartisan support, ODOT is developing a toll program to implement that vision.

The future of Oregon's transportation system depends upon diverse, stable funding and we look forward to working toward those solutions in the coming months and years," said Howe.

After a pause by the governor, tolling on I-205 is not scheduled to start until at least 2026.