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Please contact:

Cascade Policy Institute
4850 SW Scholls Ferry Rd.
Suite 103
Portland, Oregon 97225

Phone: (503) 242-0900
Fax: (503) 242-3822

www.cascadepolicy.org
info@cascadepolicy.org

4850 SW Scholls Ferry Road
Suite 103
Portland, Oregon 97225

t: 503.242.0900
f: 503.242.3822
info@cascadepolicy.org
www.cascadepolicy.org

QuickPoint! – Tolling’s Political Pile-Up

By Eric Fruits, Ph.D.

If the Oregon Department of Transportation has its way, Portland-area freeways won’t be free for much longer. Tolling is coming to Oregon, and it’s coming in about two years.

ODOT’s current plan is to toll all lanes of I-5 and I-205 from just south of Wilsonville to all the way across the Columbia River. If you’re catching a flight at PDX, shopping at Bridgeport Village, or just trying to get to work, tolling is going to drain your bank account.

Tolling Locations

- Tolling is planned on **all lanes** of I-5 and I-205 in the Portland area
- Regional Mobility Pricing Project gantry locations not yet known – will be in the draft EA
- I-205 Toll Project gantries in orange



Urban Mobility
STRATEGY

At a hearing last week, a legislator **noted** that by serving in the legislature, she would rack up \$2,000 a year in tolls. TriMet complains it doesn’t have enough buses to handle all the people it expects will be forced onto public transit. The Metro Council President worries about Interstate traffic being diverted into residential neighborhoods. ODOT estimates more than a quarter of drivers won’t be able to afford the tolls and will need subsidies. Everyone hates tolling, but our politicians are blinded by the dollar signs from tolling revenues. We’re heading for a political pile-up.

It’s not too late to stop this tolling disaster. Tolls only make sense when the money is used to expand road capacity. ODOT’s current plans fail this basic test. When the legislature meets in February, one of its top priorities must be to pass a bill that stops ODOT’s misguided tolling plans.

Eric Fruits, Ph.D. is Vice President of Research at Cascade Policy Institute, Oregon’s free market public policy research organization.

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