

KARIN POWER
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 41
MULTNOMAH AND CLACKAMAS COUNTIES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

April 1, 2019

Oregon Department of Transportation
Attn: Megan Channell
123 NW Flanders St.
Portland, OR 97209

Sent via email to: info@i5RoseQuarter.org

Dear Director Garrett and the ODOT I-5 Rose Quarter team:

It is my honor to represent House District 41, covering SE Portland, Milwaukie, Oak Grove, and parts of unincorporated Clackamas County. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft Environmental Assessment (EA) on the proposed I-5 Rose Quarter expansion project, and for the robust outreach that ODOT has conducted during the public comment period. It is in the following capacities that I write to request a full Environmental Impact (EI) statement analysis, including more specific detail on alternatives to the proposed \$500 million project that expand beyond a “no-build” scenario and pro-active greenhouse gas (GHG) reductions that could come from a project of this caliber.

As a state legislator, the youngest legislator mom, and a suburban resident, I am acutely aware of Portland’s high levels of diesel pollution and the disproportionate effects that unhealthy air has on our most vulnerable citizens. My wife and I live two blocks in from Highway 224 in Clackamas County. My toddler’s health and early lung development is a key reason I am a chief sponsor of House Bill 2007, a bill to reduce diesel pollution in our most densely populated communities by upgrading fleets and phasing out old, dirty heavy duty truck engines. However, it is in my capacity as co-Chair to the Joint Committee on Carbon Reduction that I am daily reminded that our planet has 12 years to halt emissions and curb the worst of the coming effects of climate change. The 2018 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report, Chapter 2, on Mitigation, includes the following excerpt and policy direction on reducing GHG emissions if we are to hold overall warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels:

“The combined evidence suggests that aggressive policies addressing energy efficiency are central in keeping 1.5°C within reach and lowering energy system and mitigation costs (high confidence) ... Demand-side policies that increase energy efficiency or limit energy demand at a higher rate than historically observed are critical enabling factors for reducing mitigation costs in stringent mitigation pathways across the board ... [a]mbitious sector-specific mitigation policies in industry, transportation and residential sectors are needed in the short run for emissions to peak in 2030 (Méjean et al., 2018).”¹

¹ Chapter 2, *Mitigation Pathways Compatible with 1.5°C in the Context of Sustainable Development*, available at: https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/sites/2/2019/02/SR15_Chapter2_Low_Res.pdf



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In reading the Climate Change Technical Report (CCTR) for the I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project (January 2019), this subject portion of I-5 experiences some of the highest traffic volumes in the entire state. It strikes me, then, that this is also a key component of our state's ability to meet our share of GHG emission reductions by 2030 and beyond. If 121,400 vehicles travel through this section each day, what is an estimated reduced number of vehicles post-project, and benchmarks for success in meeting GHG reductions and reducing air quality impacts to adjacent schools and sensitive populations? A wall mitigating noise impacts is surely insufficient. While some emission reduction elements outlined in the CCTR note "federal, state, and local efforts to develop more stringent fuel economy standards, inspection and maintenance programs, and transition to cleaner, low-carbon fuels for motor vehicles" are part of an overall climate change strategy, the IPCC report also draws our clear attention to reduced overall use of fossil fuels altogether. I did not see that element reflected in the current base analysis and hope it will be part of a larger EI.

Portland has long been known for its bike- and pedestrian-friendly allure and strong transit grid, and we know we must do more in order to preserve Oregon's cherished natural beauty and livability. In light of the dire IPCC report issued last year, I believe we must be scrutinizing each major initiative and doing all we can, as fast as we can, to ensure a livable planet for our future generations. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the EA and I look forward to continued partnership and engagement.

Best,

Karin Power

