

22 March, 2022

Subject: Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act funding opportunities

Dear Chair Van Brocklin and Members of the Oregon Transportation Commission

My name is Lukas Kubeja, a Climate Corps fellow housed at the Clean and Just Transportation network, submitting written testimony in support of allocating IIJA funding into projects that will truly solve roadway congestion, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and improve the equity of our transportation system so that those who are historically underserved may access the opportunities that transportation provides.

When you sit in traffic, do you ever wonder if there is a more efficient means of transportation? As you may know, the seemingly simple solution of widening the roadway does not reduce traffic congestion. Instead [studies](#) show the opposite is true. Excessive investment in widening roadways fails to alleviate traffic and ultimately exacerbates issues, like safety and pollution, that harm our communities. To relieve congestion while supporting climate and equity, I urge you to use your authority to direct IIJA funds to alternate modes of transportation like transit, biking, and walking which are proven to reduce congestion and offer numerous co-benefits.

The non-intuitive concept of [induced demand](#) may not be new to you, and describes the situation where expanded roads actually attract more drivers and lead to more traffic. When roadways become faster to pass through or easier to travel on, more people than before drive those routes, ultimately further congesting roadways and eliminating any temporary benefit of roadway expansion. This trend is well established but often overlooked which leads to investments in freeway expansion projects that simply *do not work*. For this reason, no IIJA dollars should be spent on freeway expansion projects that actually worsen congestion.

Fortunately, there is a clear path forward. [It has been shown](#) that reducing the amount we drive is a true solution to traffic congestion. This is achieved by investments in alternate modes of transportation which decreases the number of single drivers on the road, encourage people to travel on bike and on foot, and encourage the use of transit networks. These alternate modes of transportation also offer an array of co-benefits such as improvements in public health and climate pollution.

Meeting ambitious state GHG emission reduction targets cannot be done without reducing the amount we drive, which means that these targets in part rely on your decisions to dedicate substantial funding towards alternate modes of transportation. In addition, reducing driving reduces air pollution and is associated with [increasing health and safety by limiting collisions and fatalities, encouraging active lifestyles through biking and walking, and improving mental health](#). Investing in alternative transportation can also improve the equity of our transportation system. Owning and operating a car is expensive when gas, maintenance, insurance, and cost of the vehicle are taken into account. Many people in our communities are unable to afford the cost of this ownership and, in turn, do not benefit from investments in roadway enhancement. This is also the case for those who are physically unable to drive. Spending transportation

dollars on alternate modes of transportation ensures that all Oregonians, not just those who can operate and afford cars, are served justly.

*Ultimately, reducing the amount we drive and expanding alternative modes of transportation should be the top priority when spending IJJA flexible funds, not expanding roadways which is proven to exacerbate congestion among other issues.* If the climate change crisis disappeared in an instant, transportation reform would still be a pressing issue. IJJA money provides an opportunity to invest in alternate modes of transportation that reduce congestion, reduce GHG emissions, increase health and safety, and increase accessibility. It's imperative that IJJA funding is spent on *true solutions* that work for all Oregonians in order to prevent further transportation inequities and ensure a just transportation system for future generations.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Lukas Kubeja  
Transportation Fellow  
The Clean and Just Transportation Network