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QuickPoint! – ODOT Says Households Will Pay \$575 a Year in Its First Round of Tolls

By Eric Fruits, Ph.D.

This next week is going to be a big week for Oregon's off-the-rails tolling projects. On Tuesday, the feds released their "[Environmental Assessment](#)" for the I-205 tolls. On Friday, a [statewide](#) toll advisory committee is meeting. Next Monday, a [regional](#) toll advisory committee is meeting.

In the Environment Assessment, the Oregon Department of Transportation reveals some eye-popping numbers:

- Toll payments on just the I-205 project will be \$132 million a year; and
- Households will pay an average of \$575 a year in tolls.

If you think this sounds like it's bad for the economy, you're right. ODOT projects the toll project will cause job losses, reduce labor income, and have close to zero effect on economic output.

ODOT has finally shown its hand: Its I-205 tolling project will make the region noticeably worse off. It's one thing to collect \$132 million a year in tolls to make life better, but it's an entirely different thing to impoverish families and stifle businesses with nothing to show for it.

Now is the time for your voice to be heard. ODOT is seeking comments on its Environmental Assessment, and the Monday meeting has set aside time for public comment.

Our policymakers need to hear from you. It'll be too late once the toll booths go up.

Statewide Toll Rulemaking Advisory Committee (STRAC):

- Friday, Feb. 24, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
- Participants can watch the [YouTube livestream](#).
- STRAC meeting materials can be found on the [project website](#).
- Email comments on specific STRAC agenda items to oregontollrules@odot.oregon.gov with "STRAC Public Comment" in the subject line.

Regional Toll Advisory Committee (RTAC):

- Monday, Feb. 27, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
- In-person participants will meet at EcoTrust, 721 NW 9th Avenue, in the Billy Frank Conference Room.
- Online participants can join via [Zoom webinar](#) or by phone at 360 209 5623 (local) or 877 853 5257 (toll free). Participants can also watch the [YouTube livestream](#) of the meeting.
- RTAC meeting materials can be found on the [project website](#).
- Email comments on specific RTAC agenda items to oregontolling@odot.oregon.gov with "RTAC Public Comment" in the subject line.
- At RTAC meetings, time will be reserved for both online and in-person participants to provide verbal comments to the committee during the meeting for up to two minutes per speaker.

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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