

The Clark County council has read with interest Section 120, Traffic Congestion Relief Program, of House Bill 2017, which was passed earlier this month by the Oregon Legislative Assembly.

On behalf of Clark County residents, we write to convey our concerns about the potential tolling of the Interstate Bridge, Glenn L. Jackson Bridge and Interstate 5 and Interstate 205 between the Washington border and the interstates' convergence near Wilsonville. We believe tolling will be burdensome for Clark County residents.

More than 72,000 Clark County residents traveled across the two bridges to jobs in Oregon in 2015, according to Oregon Department of Revenue data. Their commutes are among the nearly 300,000 weekly river crossings recorded in both 2015 and 2016, according to Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council data.

Given the number of our community members working south of the Columbia River, Clark County ranked eighth among all counties in income tax contributions to Oregon in 2015, the Department of Revenue data show. Only Clackamas, Deschutes, Jackson, Lane, Marion, Multnomah and Washington ranked higher. We realize this ranking can fluctuate, but Clark County has historically ranked among Oregon's top 10 counties for income tax contributions.

Clark County residents contribute substantially to Oregon's coffers, and yet have no say in how the money is spent. And, unlike California residents who drive north to jobs in Oregon, Clark County residents cannot deduct their Oregon income tax payments from their federal taxes.

We are concerned that tolling would be a financial burden that would hit Clark County residents unfairly and disproportionately. The two bridges and freeway corridors are the only options for motorists heading south from Clark County.

We hope discussions about any potential tolling will recognize and accommodate our concerns. Please do not hesitate contact us.

Sincerely,