

Ladies and Gentlemen:

My name is Sonny Putter and I am a former Mayor and Councilmember for the City of Newcastle, Washington.

I am concerned that you may be making a big mistake in moving away from tolling, which is a reliable, proven method of funding transportation and which is dedicated to transportation improvements. Instead, your staff proposes two alternatives which depend heavily on new emission fees. Emission fees are unreliable and unproven and may easily be swept by the state legislature into funding non-transportation uses, as legislators have already discussed.

Moreover, with the rising popularity of electric vehicles, low emission vehicles and partial zero emission vehicles (PZEV's), emission fees would soon be in the same position as the current gas tax – generating a diminishing source of revenues in the future.

I recommend that you consider increased use of corridor tolling, as the legislature has just approved for SR 167, SR 509 and I-405. Drivers are becoming increasingly familiar with bridge and road tolls and the legislature and most drivers are accepting their use throughout the region.

To plug the supposed gap in funding the region's transportation plan through 2040, I recommend that you consider implementing the road usage fee at a higher rate than proposed by staff. I also recommend that you scrupulously examine the projects that are in the transportation plan. In my view, they represent the region's "wish list", not all are of such high priority that they must all be completed by 2040, or for that matter, completed at all.

My written testimony on July 29 elaborates on these issues. Please consider today's comments within the context of that testimony.

My testimony earlier this year spoke to the transportation funding and governance recommendations of the Rice-Stanton Commission. I ask you to look again at those recommendations.

Thank you.

Sonny Putter