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## Study: I-5 bridge tolls could cause airport traffic jams, clog Glenn Jackson bridge

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A noted area economist said that tolls on the Columbia River Crossing would eventually hamper business travelers' ability to reach their outgoing flights in time.

[Joe Cortright](#), a principal with Impresa Inc., projected that plans for adding tolls to the current I-5 bridge would shift nearly 50,000 vehicles daily to Interstate 205's Glenn Jackson Bridge. The movement would jam the bridge to capacity, affecting ingress and egress around the Portland International Airport.

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"The truly economically important and time-critical destination, if there is one, in the Portland area is Portland International Airport," Cortright said. "Adding 50,000 cars to I-205 would make it harder for everyone in the region to get to and from PDX. CRC

has not evaluated or disclosed what the travel time and economic impacts would be of this level of diversion.”

Cortright has criticized state efforts to build a new Interstate-5 crossing into Washington for most of the past decade. His report comes on the heel of [an Oregon Department of Transportation study](#) examining ways to build a new CRC without participation from Washington. Washington lawmakers refused to move forward a funding bill last summer.

In the ODOT study, tolling is assumed to begin on July 1, 2015, with rates reaching as much as \$4 for some vehicles.

Cortright used figures from the CRC consultant CDM Smith to reach his conclusions. CDM Smith’s work indicates that tens of thousands of vehicles would avoid paying a CRC toll.

“Traffic jams on I-205 will increase travel times on I-205, and on connecting routes (such as Washington’s State Route 14 and Oregon’s Interstate 84); economically important trips to Portland Airport will likely take much longer as a result,” Cortright wrote.

All told, I-205 bridge traffic would rise from 140,000 vehicles to more than 188,000 vehicles in 2016.

Cortright added that tolls would cause I-5 traffic to drop from 124,000 autos this year to 78,400 in 2016.

*Andy is the Portland Business Journal’s digital managing editor, overseeing the daily digital news operation. [Sign up here](#) to receive the free news-packed emails he curates every day.*

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