

DATE: February 11, 2013

TO: Chairmen Beyer, Starr, Bentz, and Read, Joint Committee on Interstate-5
Bridge Replacement Project

RE: Public Hearing on HB 2800

In addition to my role as Chair of the Lane County Board of Commissioners I have also become the Co-Chair of the Association of Oregon's Transportation Steering Committee. In that role I represent all 36 of Oregon's Counties, and I want to confirm for the committee that we recognize the impact this bridge has on each our county's economic health. The Association of Oregon Counties supports the I-5 Bridge Replacement project and urges quick action to keep this project moving forward.

Whether we are talking wood products moving north and south, or wheat and hay moving west, the bottom line is that nearly \$40 billion in freight crosses the bridge. That flow has value for every Oregonian, and the risk we face as the existing bridge grows more and more deficient simply is not acceptable.

Oregon's counties understand that the bridge project requires unprecedented cooperation between Oregon and Washington, and the federal government working with both states. It is imperative these relationships do not succumb to the complexity of this project and its many inter-related funding mechanisms. Counties stand ready to do our part to support you in your work in getting the correct policy and appropriation mechanisms passed during this, and the next, legislature.

What we must also place on the record is our concern that this project must not overshadow the very real needs that counties face with respect to bridge replacement and maintenance within our own bounds. AOC has grave concerns about funding the I-5 Bridge Replacement project over the long-term using federal revenues that could go to support improvement projects elsewhere in the state. Unless a longer term funding package is adopted in the next session, we could see significantly lower funding which would adversely impact projects around the state.


We have calculated at least \$130 million in bridge related work necessary to improve safety and ensure local economies function within the county system. It would be our suggestion that we continue to work together in order to prioritize a significant transportation funding package that will be ready for action in the 2015 session.

Transportation infrastructure spending will be an easier discussion to have with the citizen's of this state when they see that improvements will occur not only at the Columbia River, but in their hometowns as well.

Sincerely,



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Sid Leiken, Chair

Lane County Board of Commissioners