



"The Voice of Oregon's Wheat Producers Since 1926"

**Testimony before the Joint Interstate-5 Bridge
Replacement Project Committee
Respectfully Submitted by Jana Jarvis on behalf of
The Oregon Wheat Growers League
February 18, 2013**

**Co-Chair Beyer, Co-Chair Starr, Co-Chair Bentz, Co-Chair Read and Members of the
Committee:**

RE: Support for HB 2800

On behalf of the Oregon Wheat Growers League, a non-profit trade association representing over 4000 wheat and barley producers across the state of Oregon, we thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of the I-5 Replacement Bridge Project under consideration today in HB 2800.

Oregon's economy depends on world markets. In 2012, over \$18 billion worth of goods was exported from Oregon and one in five jobs is tied to trade in our state. For Oregon to remain competitive, our goods need to be able to flow "just in time" through a well-connected system of rail, marine, pipeline and air networks. Our communities and economies, large and small, are dependent on these systems to connect Oregon to the world.

Agriculture accounted for \$2.6 billion of these exported goods in 2012. Presently over ninety percent of the wheat grown in Oregon is destined for export. Additionally, over forty percent of the nation's wheat moves through one of the ports on the Columbia River. This translates to more than 19 million metric tons of wheat with a value of \$6.7 billion that moves under or over the Interstate Bridge. Increasing efficiencies along the I-5 corridor that will not restrict barge and ship traffic is of vital importance to agricultural producers as they move product to market.

Additionally, the I-5 Bridge is a key piece of freight infrastructure. Seismic activity in our region that could create safety and capacity issues due to bridge failure or river traffic limitations are a concern to growers. Investment in this primary cornerstone of Oregon's transportation network will benefit all Oregonians and is arguably the state's most important transportation investment in decades.

Adding capacity, increasing efficiencies, and addressing safety concerns will help Oregon address the needs of a growing global economy. The Oregon Wheat Growers League asks for your support of HB 2800.