



PORTLAND BUSINESS ALLIANCE

Leading the way

**Testimony of Sandra McDonough
President and CEO
Portland Business Alliance
Interstate-5 Bridge Replacement Joint Committee
February 18, 2013**

Good afternoon. I am Sandra McDonough, President and CEO of the Portland Business Alliance. The Alliance represents more than 1,200 employers in the greater Portland-Vancouver metropolitan area.

I want to leave you with this simple message: the business community on both sides of the river strongly supports an I-5 bridge replacement project. Our states are two of the most trade-dependent in the country, and we are lucky to have a strong manufacturing sector producing jobs with family-wage incomes. Freight is our lifeblood, and the I-5 replacement project is the main pivot point for the state's entire freight network. If our manufacturers can't get their products to our ports and out to the marketplace in an efficient, predictable and cost-effective manner, we will lose those great jobs and our working families will suffer.

When the Alliance and the Port of Portland released our ground-breaking statewide Cost of Congestion report a few years back, we interviewed businesses from Anderson Hay in Aurora to Gary Smith Trucking in Baker City to Monrovia Nursery in Dayton to Powell's Books in downtown Portland. Over and over we heard how freight congestion in Portland forced them to change shifts or shipping schedules, pay drivers to sit in traffic, or find alternate – and frequently more costly – ways get their products to market. The I-5 bridge is the state's biggest freight facility, and congestion there is sand in the gears not just of Portland's economy, but of the entire state's economy.

Our largest traded-sector employer, Intel, has moved their last departure time up two hours for outbound shipments through PDX because of increased p.m. peak congestion. If Intel experiences delays or missed shipments, it can shut down a production line as far away as Costa Rica or Malaysia, creating literally a world-wide ripple effect on production and testing operations.

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That's one example for why improving transportation continues a top priority for the Alliance.

The business community is aligned on the need for this project and understands the magnitude of the effort that will be required to complete it. We support the actions that officials at the federal, state and local level have taken to move the project forward. We want you to know that we stand by you in that effort and will support you in any way that we can as you move this project on to construction.

The Alliance appreciates your leadership on this important issue, and we are happy to add our support for this innovative and creative approach. We urge you to approve HB 2800. Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

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