



AMERICAN COUNCIL OF ENGINEERING COMPANIES OF OREGON

Testimony in Support of
HB 4113
to the
The House Transportation and Economic Development Committee
February 12, 2014

Good afternoon, my name is David Simmons, Vice President with CH2M HILL, an Oregon born consulting engineering firm and I'm the current President of the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) Oregon. ACEC Oregon represents more than 110 member firms and more than 3,500 engineers in Oregon. We offer our support for HB 4113 and will continue our active advocacy for investment in Oregon's critical infrastructure. We have no doubt that this is a needed and timely investment to ensure the entire I-5 system can continue to operate efficiently and safely for freight, commuters, visitors and locals who use this corridor. The long-term benefits are huge, but the short term design and construction jobs, along with products and materials to be purchased locally will help further Oregon's economic recovery. We believe:

- Replacing the I-5 bridge is a major investment in the infrastructure of our region, and is proactively looking to the future of our state. We are literally living off the foresight and investments made by our great-grandparents back in the early 1900's. We need to plan and build our infrastructure NOW so that our kids, grandkids, and great-grandkids can look back and say we had the same foresight to look to future needs.
- The proposed project is the result of a decade of consensus building, and has been approved by ALL the affected local jurisdictions. The process to get to consensus is time-consuming, and we should recognize that failure to support the project at this point will result in a "do-over", adding many years and \$100's of millions to the cost of construction.
- The proposed project is recognized nationally as a balanced, multi-modal solution to transportation problems that affect the economy of the state of Oregon, the Pacific Northwest, and indeed the entire country. We have the support of the Obama administration and key members of Congress. A strong commitment of support from the state of Oregon will send a message that this project is critical to the state and will set in motion the steps needed to ensure federal funding.
- An Oregon-led project will put the state in a strong position to manage risk and control the financial tools, such as toll-setting, that will protect our ability to bond the project. It also simplifies the administration of the project (one state is leading, instead of jointly sharing responsibility), and is the same process used to build virtually all the other bridges linking Oregon and Washington across the Columbia River.
- Washington state's failure to act last year simply means that the improvements to I-5 interchanges north of the bridge will be deferred until they find funding. It does not change the nature of the project or the need.

I thank legislative leadership, Governor Kitzhaber and this committee for the political courage to take the lead on this issue.

I thank you very much for your time and consideration.