



METRO COUNCIL PRESIDENT TOM HUGHES

February 12, 2014

The Honorable Tobias Read, Chair
House Committee on Transportation and Economic Development
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Read and Members of the Committee:

As our state and region grow, we must work together to maintain and build new infrastructure that will keep our economy moving and provide residents with safe travel options.

The I-5 Bridge Replacement Project is another step in that important direction. It will remove one of the west coast's worst bottlenecks, add much-needed transit capacity, create significantly safer conditions for bicyclists and pedestrians, and make the connection across the Columbia River seismically sound long into the future. It is a critical project for the Portland region and the entire state of Oregon.

Our growing economy needs to move efficiently and safely, unlike the existing bridges which use 1910s technology on a modern interstate highway. A recent malfunction in the aging machinery that lifts the north-bound bridge blocked traffic for hours. This is an important wake-up call to replace these structures before another malfunction shuts them down permanently.

On behalf of the Metro Council, I would like to urge the Legislature to once again approve an equitable funding package for this project that reflects its importance to the state and the Portland region while addressing its impacts on the local community. We believe the -3 amendment to HB 4113 represents such an approach.

The process to find an answer to the I-5 bridge problem has been long and arduous, but we have arrived at a solution. The proposal before your Committee today meets the needs of the state and should move forward.

Thank you for your leadership on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Tom Hughes
Metro Council President