



Legacy Health

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House Committee on Transportation and Economic Development
Legacy Health Testimony of Support
I-5 Bridge Replacement
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Good afternoon. My name is Jonathan Avery. I am the Chief Administrative Officer at Legacy Good Samaritan Medical Center in Portland. Until January of this year I was the Chief Administrative Officer of Legacy Salmon Creek Medical Center in Vancouver, Washington.

I have been involved in the I-5 Bridge Replacement Project on behalf of Legacy Health on both sides of the river for many years. I am here today to reiterate Legacy's strong support for the replacement of the I-5 Bridge crossing the Columbia River.

As you may know, Legacy Health is a major health care provider in Oregon and SW Washington, admitting more than 56,000 people annually to our six hospitals and treating more than 500,000 people in outpatient visits.

Legacy is also among one of the largest employers in the region with approximately 9,000 employees. Our employees come from all over the metro area to work in our facilities in Oregon and SW Washington. Many travel across the I-5 Bridge daily.

From our perspective, the greatest concern with not replacing the I-5 Bridge now is safety. The number of accidents in the five-mile project area stands at about 400 per year - twice the rate of similar highways in Oregon and Washington. Sixty-six percent of crashes are rear-end collisions, and 14 percent are sideswipes. People are injured in more than one-third of these crashes. We see cases of this regularly in our emergency departments on both sides of the river.

Lane additions and improvements at key exit and entrance points – “add/drop” lanes – will reduce accidents involving merging traffic. Widened shoulders will provide more room for stalled vehicles and for emergency vehicle traffic. Because crash rates increase three to four times during bridge lifts, the elimination of lifts will offer another safety improvement. Without a new bridge, crash rates are predicted to double in the next 20 years.

We believe, from a health and safety perspective, this bridge needs to be replaced.

Today medical transportation between the states is difficult and can result in the loss of precious time. The antiquated, substandard bridge we now live with compromises the ability to move patients and equipment in a safe, efficient, and timely manner.

On any given day at Legacy, we never know how long it will take:

- To get a patient to a facility
- A doctor to a patient
- A critical piece of equipment to a site when necessary.

One example is critically ill patient transports. Every month, more than 300 ambulances transport patients from Clark County to the Level I Trauma units and pediatric intensive care units in Portland. All too often life-saving care for these patients is delayed due to bridge lifts or the already-lengthy gridlock, which extends well beyond rush-hour periods.

A new I-5 bridge crossing will eliminate bridge lifts and provide a higher measure of travel predictability between our two states. This predictability is essential to us in our business of protecting peoples' health.

We need a new bridge now. This is our chance to ensure that all of the years of work and public input into the I-5 Bridge Replacement project produce a safer, more reliable crossing.

Legacy Health urges you to support an Oregon-led I-5 Bridge Replacement.

Thank you.