



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

**Testimony before the Transportation and Economic Development Committee
Respectfully Submitted by Jana Jarvis on behalf of
The Oregon Wheat Growers League
February 12, 2014**

Chair Read and Members of the Committee:

RE: Support for HB 4113 with amendments

The Oregon Wheat Growers League has long been a supporter of the I-5 Bridge Replacement Project before you today. Our 1400 members statewide depend on the ability to move product to market and recognize the opportunity you have, and the time constraints of the decision, to address one of the major transportation infrastructure issues in our state.

We understand first and foremost that Oregon's economy depends on access to world markets. Eighty percent of our agricultural products are shipped out of state. 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 in Oregon accounted for \$2.6 billion of these exported goods in 2012. Wheat is among the top five crops grown in Oregon and nearly ninety percent of it is destined for export. However, wheat is the third largest field crop in the United States and nearly forty percent of the nation's wheat moves to the export market via one of the ports along the Columbia River. While wheat is second on the list of U.S. exports via Oregon at a value of over \$6.7 billion, it is the number one export crop in Oregon. This translates to more than 19 million metric tons of wheat moving over or under the Interstate Bridge. Increasing efficiencies along the I-5 corridor that will not restrict barge or ocean vessels is of vital importance to our members.

The I-5 Bridge is a key piece of our 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 the amendments offered in HB 4113.