



Chair Read and members of the committee:

Thank you for taking up HB 4113 and for the opportunity to testify. My name is Jeremy Rogers and I am with the Oregon Business Council. The Oregon Business Council is a statewide business association that mobilizes business executives to improve Oregon's economy and quality of life. OBC also staffs the Oregon Business Plan, a collaboration with business groups across Oregon to create jobs, raise incomes and reduce poverty.

Replacing the I-5 bridge across the Columbia river has been a top priority of the Oregon Business Plan for years. That is because of the negative statewide impact of congestion, delay and safety problems on the current bridge and the importance to the entire regional economy of the free flow of freight between Oregon and Washington.

\$40 billion in freight is currently crossing the river and this is estimated to be \$71 billion by 2030. Attached you will find a map of just a handful of the businesses across Oregon that depend on the I-5 bridge between Oregon and Washington for their success. These businesses include beer producers like Full Sail in Hood River, high tech companies like Mentor Graphics in Wilsonville, food processors like Norpac in Salem and Boardman Foods in Morrow County, and wood products companies like Bright Wood in Madras and Boise Wood Products with locations all across Oregon.

These companies are all the traded-sector, export oriented manufacturers that provide goods paying jobs and that generate new wealth in our communities. In other words, these are the types of companies that we want to grow and be more numerous in Oregon. In a recent survey of 39 Oregon businesses about Oregon's transportation system 34 reported using the bridge to move goods and 21 said they were adversely affected by congestion at the crossing, forcing them to make changes to their production, pickup or delivery schedules.

That's because the bridge is backed up for hours every day, is a hot spot for accidents, and its the only liftspan bridge on the entire I-5 corridor between Canada and Mexico. Essentially, the current bridge is a clot in the economic artery of Oregon, and it will continue to get worse. While there is valid concern about a total failure in a major earthquake--geologists predict a 37% likelihood of a +8.0 quake happening in the next 50 years--even more minor disruptions pose a grave threat to Oregon's economy.

In September the bridge was closed for the annual greasing of its lift cables. Twice in the last three months the bridge lift got stuck in the raised position, closing the bridge for hours and forcing ODOT to have rollers specially manufactured-a two week process--and causing the bridge to raise and lower at half speed in the interim.

We have the chance right now to fix this problem and it has taken us more than fifteen years to get here. This project is a critical priority for Oregon and the health of Oregon businesses depends on it. Please help Oregon define its own economic future by passing HB 4113 and moving this project forward. Thank you.



Oregon Business Council

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