

May 20, 2022

Joint Committee on the Interstate 5 Bridge  
900 Court Street, NE, Room 453  
Salem OR 97301

**VIA EMAIL:** JI5B.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov

Dear Co-Chairs Beyer and McLain and Members of the Committee:

The 44 undersigned organizations and our collective members believe a new, multi-modal I-5 bridge is essential to serving our state and safely and efficiently moving people and goods. As the Interstate Bridge Replacement (IBR) Executive Steering Group considers next steps, it is critically important that the ESG and other decision-making bodies involved in the bridge replacement effort focus on design options that maximize and expand capacity to meet current and future demand in moving people and goods between Oregon and Washington.

The current bridge has served our region for more than 100 years. Given the multibillion-dollar cost of replacement, we must plan for a new bridge to last another 100 years. This means planning for a bridge that will meet demands for many decades to come. The existing I-5 bridge is failing to efficiently serve the nearly 140,000 vehicles that traverse it daily. Heavy traffic congestion persists for seven to 10 hours every day, imposing heavy costs on bridge users. These include personal impacts like reduced family time, financial costs associated with the delayed delivery of goods, and environmental costs from idling vehicles.

Improved bicycle, pedestrian and transit options are essential to the future bridge. So is expanded vehicle lane capacity. As you are aware, more than \$70 million in freight crosses the bridge daily, a number that will increase as our growing region requires more goods and services.

And time is of the essence. In addition to the bridge's inability to meet the needs of modern commerce and travel, it is well established that the two existing structures are at [risk for collapse](#) in the event of a major earthquake. This would be catastrophic for our region and the entire western United States.

Our organizations represent all sectors of the Oregon economy and hundreds of thousands of employees throughout the state. Almost all of the employers and employees we represent suffer the effects of inadequate vehicle capacity. Expanding that capacity will help retailers, which depend upon the timely delivery of merchandise. It will help businesses in the agriculture, food-processing, restaurant and grocery sectors, which require the rapid movement of highly perishable goods. New lanes will help manufacturers move raw materials and finished products, hospitals move medical supplies, doctors commute to work, and patients access care. Building a bridge that meets the car, truck, pedestrian and transit needs of the next century will help all our region's residents move safely and efficiently to work, school and play.

We urge the Executive Steering Group to support a design option that increases vehicle capacity to meet the current and growing transportation demands in our region.

Thank you for considering this critically important request.



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