



July 19, 2022

RE: Public comment on the Interstate Bridge Replacement Program

Dear Bi-state Legislative Committee,

Washington State University Vancouver supports the Interstate Bridge Replacement Program and its commitment to finding a solution that will improve our transportation system now and in the future.

WSU Vancouver serves an eclectic student population. The average age of an undergraduate student is 26. Many, if not most, students work while attending college. The IBR program will create efficient access to each state enabling students to get to jobs and internships on the south side of the Columbia River and their university classes on the north side.

Twenty-four percent of WSU Vancouver employees reside in Oregon and commute to campus. The Interstate Bridge creates congestion that can make an employee's day unpredictable and therefore stressful. Students and employees who commute using public transportation can spend more than two hours on any combination of bus and light rail—one way! The time spent in Interstate Bridge congestion results in costs to WSU Vancouver, the economy in general and the environment.

WSU Vancouver and the IBR program are committed to centering equity in their work. WSU Vancouver has a strategic imperative to promote an ethical and socially just society through an intentional commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion. Large transportation infrastructure projects have historically harmed many low-income communities and communities of color. Our campus supports the IBR program to diminish harm to minoritized communities and ensure these communities have a voice in shaping the outcome. We must ensure everyone crossing the Columbia River has an opportunity to take advantage of the economic and transportation benefits afforded by the IBR program.

WSU Vancouver urges the Bi-State Legislative Committee to work together to prioritize the IBR program to replace the aging Interstate Bridge with a seismically resilient, multimodal structure that provides improved mobility and reliability for people, goods and services that are critical to the vitality of WSU Vancouver and the states of Washington and Oregon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Renny Christopher'.

Renny Christopher

Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Acting Chancellor