

Co-Chair Beyer, Co-Chair McClain,

The recently-announced dramatic increase of the total cost estimate of the I-5 Bridge project seems like a critical moment in the process you've been monitoring. I share what must be very widespread concern at this development.

Before Oregon commits further resources to the project, I believe it's important to have clear answers for citizens and legislators to these key questions:

1) How does Oregon avoid making an open-ended financial commitment to the project? As a practical matter, are we likely to be compelled to pay more than initially agreed for our share of the project in the not-unlikely event of further cost increases? How, practically speaking, can we cap our commitment?

2) What are the most likely impacts of additional Oregon investment on the state's overall transportation plan? What projects are likely to be cancelled, deferred, or funded at lower levels if Oregon's cost share of the bridge project increases? We have pressing transportation needs on my district, and my constituents need clarity on how the cost increase for the bridge project might affect their implementation.

3) Have project alternatives that would cost substantially less been given full and fair consideration? I've heard different answers to that question. The probability of truly difficult budgetary decisions in coming sessions imposes a responsibility to give every potential cost-savings careful and rigorous analysis. Oregon's full participation in this project will inevitably leave some other vital needs unmet, a reality that needs to be kept front of mind as decisions are made on the project's final design.

You are charged with complex and very difficult determinations. I appreciate your willingness to wrestle with them. I'm confident in your awareness of the critical nature of the current choice point in this project, and the seriousness with which you'll reflect on the long-term effects and consequences for Oregon's future. Thanks for your consideration of my comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jeff Golden", written over a faint circular stamp.

Senator Jeff Golden  
Senate District 3