



CITY OF HOOD RIVER

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May 4, 2021

Senator Fred Girod, Co-Chair
Representative Paul Holvey, Co-Chair
Subcommittee on Capital Construction
Joint Committee on Ways and Means

Co-Chair Girod, Co-Chair Holvey and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to support the Port of Hood River's lottery bonding request to the Oregon Legislature for \$5 million to help fund Phase 2 of the Hood River/White Salmon Interstate Bridge replacement project. The current toll bridge is a critical link for our regional bi-state economy, but it is also functionally obsolete, weight-restricted and seismically deficient. If construction of the replacement bridge is not underway by 2026, the existing bridge will need \$50 million in repairs and rehabilitation over the next 15 years in order to remain safe and operational. Phase 2 of the bridge replacement needs to begin in 2021 in order to keep the project on schedule.

This project is critical to our region for a number of reasons:

- Economic importance of bridge to flow of goods and services between business in Oregon and Washington. Over 4-million trips annually
- Narrow travel lanes and the recent reduction in vehicle weight limit from 80,000 lbs. to 64,000 lbs would be upgraded
- Lost tourism opportunity due to lack of bike/ped facilities
- Lack of seismic resilience
- Current bridge is an unsafe choke point during emergencies, such as 2016 oil train derailment in Mosier and 2017 Eagle Creek Fire.

I am strongly supportive of the Port of Hood River's efforts to secure \$5 million from Oregon this session. This funding would match a \$5 million federal BUILD grant, \$5 million from Washington state (confirmed), and \$1.25 million from the Port to fund the \$16.25 million total cost of Phase 2 of this vital project.

Thank you for your consideration.

Mayor Kate McBride
City of Hood River