



March 23, 2023

Joint Committee on Transportation
Honorable Co-Chair Sen. Chris Gorsek
Honorable Co-Chair Rep. Susan McLain
Honorable Vice Chair Sen. Brian Boquist
Honorable Vice Chair Rep. Boshart Davis

RE: Testimony supporting HB 3301 and 3323

Chairs Gorsek and McLain, and Vice Chairs Boquist and Boshart Davis, and Members of the Committee,
My name is Jon Isaacs, and I am the Vice President of Public Affairs for the Portland Business Alliance.

The Portland Business Alliance (the Alliance) is greater Portland's Chamber of Commerce and represents the largest, most diverse network of businesses in the region. The Alliance advocates for business at all levels of government to support commerce, community health, and the region's overall prosperity. We represent over 2,100 members, from 27 counties, 14 states, and virtually every industry sector. More than 80% of our members are small businesses.

I am writing today to express the Alliance's support for HB 3301 and HB 3323, which provide funding for the Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge.

Our region is threatened by the risk of a major Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake that could hit the region at any time. Experts say there is a 1 in 3 chance that a magnitude 8+ earthquake will impact our region in the next 50 years. Right now, none of the downtown bridges are expected to withstand that earthquake. That's why Multnomah County is taking the lead to make at least one downtown bridge earthquake-ready, the Burnside Bridge.

The Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge Project is important to the Alliance, and the economy of the entire Portland metro area, because replacing it now is, by far, the most cost-effective way to ensure that there is a lifeline route across the Willamette River if and when a major seismic event occurs. Replacing the bridge now will save over \$460 million in future costs from recurring maintenance, repairs, and rehabilitation over the next fifty years. And it is certainly far less expensive than if we do nothing and allow all bridges to collapse leaving no way to cross the Willamette River.

We point out that this is the same situation with other critical bridges, like the I5 bridge replacement. If the current figures seem expensive, we ask that you pause and ask what the cost will be if they are allowed to collapse, and these essential crossings are cut off? What will the cost be to our overall economy and community be then?

For the Burnside Bridge Replacement, we know the answer. According to Multnomah County Investing in seismic resiliency now could lessen the economic losses of a disaster by 10-24 percent (depending on the level of investment to the system). And according to the Oregon resilience plan, every \$1 spent pre-disaster on preparedness saves \$6 post-disaster.

The Burnside Bridge is located on an Emergency Transportation Route, and this project will ensure a new seismically resilient Burnside Bridge will be immediately usable after a major earthquake. This will allow

emergency responders to quickly get to those who need help. And it will be a crucial link for the region, helping to significantly support rapid economic recovery.

Knowing that a major seismic event will inevitably come to our region, we strongly urge the Oregon Legislature to support funding bill HB 3323 to ensure our Burnside lifeline bridge is built as soon as possible. And we urge the legislature to bring this preventative mindset when considering funding for all bridges of regional significance. The time to act is now. Thank you.

Jon Isaacs (*he/him*)

Vice President, Public Affairs

PORTLAND BUSINESS ALLIANCE

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