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On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation  
Measure: HB2098

Testimony before the  
Joint Transportation Committee  
HB 2098 -2  
April 27, 2023

We need a new Columbia River I-5 Bridge built to current freeway and seismic standards. ODOT, after an early screening (2006), failed to seriously consider alternatives other than a fixed span bridge.

The Legislature needs to direct ODOT to consider alternative proposals since they failed to develop a safe, cost-effective solution. For example:

A lower bridge with I-5 continuing under the BNSF railway on the Washington shore as it does today and with an opening span allowing high vessels to pass. This option eliminates the high cost of rebuilding freeway interchanges and would allow the existing bridges to be repurposed for light rail, bikes and pedestrians. ODOT's proposed interchange in Vancouver is expensive, unsafe, requires steep access/egress, seismically vulnerable and increases greenhouse gas emissions.

An immersed tunnel option. While this option would likely be more expensive than a lower bridge, it also eliminates the need for ODOT's expensive interchanges and elevated infrastructure. It is the most seismically secure option, improves safety and avoids issues related to adverse weather/wind. It would probably cost less than ODOT's IBR.

An outside, independent consultant is needed – ODOT is unlikely to find fault in their long history of misdirection in this project.

The "IBR" developed by ODOT violates federal waterway navigation law. To obtain US Coast Guard approval for ODOT's design, a moveable span is required. Adding a lift span to the current high level proposal makes no sense and will significantly increase project costs. Alternatives must be considered.

The options above would:

- (1) dramatically reduce costs,
- (2) improve safety,
- (3) reduce seismic vulnerability,

- (4) eliminate interference with waterway navigation,
- (5) avoid interference with aviation from the nearby airfield and
- (6) reduce carbon footprint.

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