

April 27, 2023

Joint Committee on Transportation  
Oregon State Legislature

Re: Support for funding Oregon's Share of the Interstate  
5 Bridge Replacement

Dear Members of the Committee:

As you work to shape HB 2098, the Oregon Business Council wishes to express its strong support for funding Oregon's share of the I-5 bridge replacement in this Legislative Session. The Portland region's people and economy along with the entire West Coast, now and in the future, vitally need a dependable, efficient, multi-modal I-5 Columbia River crossing.

More importantly, *it needs it now*, as soon as it can be funded and built. The existing two-span structure is long past its useful life, is a choke point on interstate commerce and travel, and is seismically unsafe. Moreover, there is a fleeting window of opportunity to act that may not come around again for decades. With federal and Washington State commitments in place, it is time for Oregon to produce its share of funding.

The companion document following this letter identifies Oregon's share of funding the I-5 bridge replacement as one of the priorities of the Oregon Business Plan, a policy forum managed by OBC and involving leaders from across Oregon's business, government, nonprofit, and grassroots communities.

OBC commends the work of the Joint Committee on this issue and its efforts to create a path forward.

Sincerely,



Duncan Wyse  
President

## SECURE OREGON'S SHARE OF FUNDING FOR THE INTERSTATE BRIDGE REPLACEMENT

### The Opportunity and Why It's Important

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The Interstate 5 Columbia River crossing is one of the worst choke points for interstate travel and commerce in the nation. Not only is it a bottleneck that restricts the Oregon economy, it is also a potential disaster. Over 100 years old, it is vulnerable to total collapse in the event of an earthquake. Federal infrastructure funds will likely be available to support this project if Washington and Oregon can agree on a design and secure matching funding.

### Current Status

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A bi-state commission is working on the design. A locally preferred alternative should be ready by mid-summer, 2022. Washington State has committed \$1 billion to the project and federal funding will likely be available for at least half of the cost if Oregon and Washington can agree on a proposal. Oregon will need to come up with its share of the state match, probably equal to Washington at \$1 billion.

### Recommendations

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- Complete a cost-effective design that accommodates freight, light rail transit, and automobiles. The design should address critical freight needs that affect commerce throughout Oregon and the entire West Coast.
- Review funding options and secure adoption of a funding strategy by the 2023 Legislature. Ensure that funding does not crowd out other projects called out in the 2019 Oregon Transportation Program, including the Rose Quarter project.