
May 16, 2023

Subject: Support for HB 3622 – Funding Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge Project

Dear Chairs Frederick and McLain, Vice-Chairs Boquist and Boshart-Davis, and members of the Joint Transportation Committee:

Thank you for taking the time to review my written testimony in support of House Bill 3622, which would provide funding to create the first earthquake resilient river crossing in downtown Portland, along with other important bridge infrastructure in our region.

My name is Cassie Davis, and I am writing as a 10-year resident in Oregon, a woman-owned DBE business owner, and someone that has worked on large infrastructure projects for the past decade.

If funded, the Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge will play a critical role in community safety, response, and economic recovery after a major earthquake, provide numerous jobs in the Portland Metro Region, and move this region closer to its safety and multi-modal transportation goals.

Our region is filled with bridges and yet is suffering from a lack of reliable bridges over major waterways that are crucial to the mobility, resiliency and livability of communities and economies.

Oregon's largest metro region and statewide economic driver currently does not have a downtown bridge that will be usable immediately after a major earthquake. The Pacific Northwest regularly experiences some of the largest earthquakes in the world along the Cascadia Subduction Zone (CSZ). Geologists estimate there is a one in three chance that a CSZ earthquake with a magnitude of 8+ will strike the Portland region in the next 50 years. Completion of Multnomah County's Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge project will ensure that we have at least one downtown bridge that emergency responders can use after a major earthquake. Making the Burnside Bridge seismically resilient will improve the reliability of the nearly 19-mile Burnside St. regional Emergency Transportation Route, which stretches from Washington County to Gresham across the heart of the metro region and plays an instrumental role in the overall transportation system.

Along with future benefits following a natural disaster, the Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge project would improve mobility options by including safer and enhanced pedestrian, ADA and bicycle facilities and the opportunity to build a new streetcar line.

Another item I'd like to highlight is the many jobs (over 6,000) that will be provided by the construction of this pivotal bridge. More importantly, the number of these jobs that will go to emerging small and disadvantaged businesses, women, minorities, and people of color. I, myself, an emerging women-owned business owner have had the opportunity to work with and for Multnomah County. In fact, by contracting opportunities with the County, empowerment by County staff and resources, I was able to start my own small business. The County has an outstanding track record for supporting our disadvantaged community members and seeing that dollars spent stay within our community.

The issue at hand here is not whether a resilient Burnside Bridge is needed, but finding the funding to ensure such an instrumental bridge is built within a timely manner. Each year that passes makes the cost of the bridge go up and the need for funding more challenging. Each year that passes, the threat of the massive and devastating Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake gets even closer. I strongly urge you to put this bridge and all the people that will be impacted by it at the top of your priority list, by supporting House Bill 3622.

Thank you and sincere regards,

Cassie Davis

Owner/Manager

CD Consulting