

April 11, 2025

Joint Committee on Transportation
Oregon State Legislature
Salem, Oregon

RE: HB2749

Appropriates moneys to the Department of Transportation for distribution to the City of Portland for the purpose of designing a bridge across Columbia Boulevard.

Committee:

I am writing in **support of HB2749**.

Portland faces a significant seismic threat from the Cascadia Subduction Zone, with the St. John's neighborhood particularly vulnerable to catastrophic isolation during a major earthquake. Scientific analysis indicates several critical concerns:

The St. John's peninsula would likely experience extensive soil liquefaction along its waterfront areas to the west, north, and south. Additionally, the 100-foot BNSF railroad cut that bisects the neighborhood presents a formidable barrier to evacuation and emergency response.

The aging St. John's Bridge and the four vehicular crossings spanning the railroad cut have not been sufficiently reinforced to withstand a major seismic event. This infrastructure vulnerability could effectively trap over 16,700 residents without evacuation routes or access to emergency services, medical assistance, or essential supplies.

Of particular concern is the proximity to the Critical Energy Infrastructure (CEI) Hub. Earthquake damage to these facilities could release hazardous materials, creating severe health and safety hazards for a population unable to evacuate.

The attached annotated map illustrates these vulnerabilities and their potential cumulative impact on neighborhood resilience and resident safety during a major seismic event.

Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,

Michael Veale

841 S Gaines St, Suite 2200
Portland, OR 97239

Red shaded areas are high probability of "liquefaction" due to Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake

CEI Energy Hub high risk with liquefaction during major earthquake

Objective is to replace existing Columbia Blvd bridge

People and property WEST of the yellow box are essentially on an island; likely with no escape with major seismic event as bridges would likely collapse

Yellow box represents 100' railroad ditch. There are four bridges (red), all very old and not seismically strong.

St Johns Bridge is 93 years old and its seismic integrity is unknown

16,709 Residents (2023 ACS 5yr)

