

Submitter: Litzzy Venturi
On Behalf Of: Board of the Portsmouth Neighborhood Association
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2749

Testimony to the Oregon Legislature
In Support of Earthquake-Resilient Infrastructure Funding for a Seismically Safe Bridge Connecting St. John's to Portland
Submitted by Litzzy Venturi, Secretary, Portsmouth Neighborhood Association
4/16/2025

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,
Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Portsmouth Neighborhood Association and the broader North Portland community. My name is Litzzy Venturi, and I serve as the secretary of the Portsmouth Neighborhood Association. Today, I urge you to fund the construction of an earthquake-resilient bridge that will preserve a critical lifeline between the St. Johns neighborhood and the rest of the City of Portland in the event of a catastrophic seismic event. The need for this infrastructure investment is both urgent and long overdue. The existing bridges connecting St. John's to the surrounding areas are not designed to withstand the level of seismic activity anticipated from a Cascadia Subduction Zone (CSZ) earthquake. Studies have confirmed that many of Portland's bridges, especially older ones like the St. Johns Bridge—are at high risk of collapse during a major earthquake. The consequences of such a collapse would be devastating. St. Johns would be effectively cut off from emergency response, supply chains, and evacuation routes. The bridges connecting the St. Johns community are lifelines. In a moment of crisis, their functionality could mean the difference between isolation and survival for tens of thousands of Portlanders. Seismic resilience is not just a technical issue—it is a justice issue. North Portland communities are home to many low-income, BIPOC, disabled, and elderly residents who are particularly vulnerable in times of disaster. Investing in a bridge that can withstand a magnitude 9.0 earthquake is not only a matter of engineering—it is a moral imperative to safeguard our communities' lives, livelihoods, and long-term recovery capacity. We are calling on the Legislature to fund not only the design and construction of a seismically resilient bridge, but also to prioritize community engagement throughout the process. We want infrastructure that is not only physically durable but socially accountable—serving all Portlanders equitably during emergencies and beyond. This bridge could be a model of forward-looking, community-centered planning—an example of what it means to build for the future we know is coming.

Our communities are organizing for resilience. We are doing preparedness drills, setting up mutual aid networks, and caring for our most vulnerable neighbors. But we cannot do this alone. We need the infrastructure to match our care. We need this bridge.

Please act now—before the next disaster strikes—and fund the construction of an earthquake-resilient bridge to keep St. Johns and North Portland connected, safe, and supported in the face of a seismic catastrophe.

Thank you for your time and leadership.

Sincerely,

Litzy Venturi

Secretary, Portsmouth Neighborhood Association