



**Joint Legislative Action Committee
Regarding the Construction of a New
Interstate 5 Bridge**



Joint Interstate 5 Bridge Committee

July 23, 2021

Attn: Oregon's Congressional Delegation

The Hon. Ron Wyden, Senator
The Hon. Suzanne Bonamici, Representative
The Hon. Earl Blumenauer, Representative
The Hon. Kurt Schrader, Representative

The Hon. Jeff Merkley, Senator
The Hon. Cliff Bentz, Representative
The Hon. Peter DeFazio, Representative

Re: Bi-State Legislative support for the Interstate Bridge Replacement (IBR) program

Dear Members of the Oregon Congressional Delegation:

As members of a joint Oregon-Washington Committee, we are writing to you to strongly advocate for consideration of federal funding for the Interstate Bridge Replacement project within upcoming transportation legislation. Both states have been engaged for multiple years in coordination and discussion to ensure that Oregon and Washington are prepared to complete this crucial interstate infrastructure project.

Our Bi-State Legislative Committee, which is made up of eight legislators from each state, provides oversight and guidance to hold the IBR program accountable to its critical milestones. The committee was formed as the Joint Oregon-Washington Legislative Action Committee in Washington and the Joint Committee on the Interstate Bridge in Oregon. We are each committed to the success of the program. We have met collaboratively since 2018 and conducted 12 official meetings of the full Bi-State Legislative Committee, as well as numerous co-chair calls and conversations, in coordination with program staff.

In the last three years, both Oregon and Washington have allocated a combined \$80 million in funding toward replacement of this essential piece of infrastructure. We are committed to supporting this program with additional state investments, in combination with other funding sources, as the program progresses. When restarting the Interstate Bridge Replacement work, this committee directed the program to utilize past work, while taking into consideration changes since the previous project. Doing this maximizes past state and federal investment.

Early program efforts have included the foundational work needed to effectively conduct a transparent, data-driven process with extensive and equitable stakeholder and community

engagement. The state DOTs have hired a program administrator and consultant team who have reengaged with program partners to ensure bi-state cooperation and support, and formed public advisory groups to provide feedback and recommendations. The bi-state program team has demonstrated its commitment to update and improve upon past work to maximize what remains valid, while accounting for recent changes, to identify a solution that meets current and future regional needs and priorities.

The program team is working with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for continued guidance on the best path for moving forward, including weekly meetings and requests for input on major program milestones. The program's current work plans to identify an IBR solution to submit to FHWA and FTA for re-evaluation in spring 2022 as part of the federal environmental review process, in order to begin construction in 2025.

The program team is also collaborating with eight local partner agencies, representing communities on both sides of the Columbia River, to facilitate regional alignment as work continues to identify a solution that balances differing perspectives and aims to serve the complex needs of the variety of users. While we know there are difficult decisions ahead, there is alignment with the partner agencies and advisory groups, as well as our Bi-State Legislative Committee, on the direction the IBR program is heading and the critical need to build a replacement bridge.

Under our direction and guidance, the program is on track to identify an IBR solution next year and reach construction in 2025. We remain committed to working together, with the program team, to see a successful bridge replacement. We will do our part to identify state-level investments within our respective state legislatures.

We appreciate your ongoing recognition of the critical regional and national importance of this program and look forward to the continued collaboration of the congressional delegations in both states.

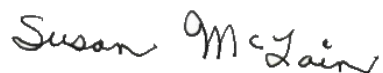
Sincerely,



Lee Beyer, Co-Chair
State Senator, 6th Legislative District (OR)



Annette Cleveland, Co-Chair
State Senator, 49th Legislative District (WA)



Susan McLain, Co-Chair
State Representative, 29th Legislative District (OR)



Linda Wilson, Co-Chair
State Senator, 17th Legislative District (WA)



Sharon Wylie, Co-Chair
State Representative, 49th Legislative District (WA)



Shelly Boshart Davis
State Representative, 15th Legislative District (OR)



Jake Fey
State Representative, 27th Legislative District (WA)



Lynn Findley
State Senator, 30th Legislative District (OR)



Steve Hobbs
State Senator, 44th Legislative District (WA)



Greg Smith
State Representative, 57th Legislative District (OR)



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July 23, 2021

Attn: Washington's Congressional Delegation

The Hon. Patty Murray, Senator
The Hon. Suzan DelBane, Representative
The Hon. Jaime Herrera Beutler, Representative
The Hon. Cathy McMorris Rodgers,
Representative
The Hon. Pramila Jayapal, Representative
The Hon. Adam Smith, Representative

The Hon. Maria Cantwell, Senator
The Hon. Rick Larsen, Representative
The Hon. Dan Newhouse, Representative
The Hon. Derek Kilmer, Representative
The Hon. Kim Schrier, Representative
The Hon. Marilyn Strickland, Representative

Re: Bi-State Legislative support for the Interstate Bridge Replacement (IBR) program

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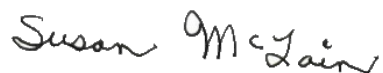
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