



May 7, 2021

Senator Fred Girod, Co-Chair
Representative Paul Holvey, Co-Chair
Subcommittee on Capital Construction
Joint Committee on Ways and Means

Co-Chair Girod, Co-Chair Holvey and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to support the Port of Hood River's lottery bonding request to the Oregon Legislature for \$5 million to help fund Phase 2 of the Hood River/White Salmon Interstate Bridge replacement project. The current toll bridge is a critical link for our regional bi-state economy, but it is also functionally obsolete, weight-restricted and seismically deficient. If construction of the replacement bridge is not underway by 2026, the existing bridge will need \$50 million in repairs and rehabilitation over the next 15 years in order to remain safe and operational. Phase 2 of the bridge replacement needs to begin in 2021 in order to keep the project on schedule.

The replacement of the Hood River/White Salmon Interstate bridge is vital for the future of Agriculture in our region. Local growers rely on the bridge to deliver their crops to local packing facilities located on either side of the bridge as well as truckers who rely on the bridge when hauling our local crops to retailers and consumers around the world. The narrow lanes and current weight restrictions of the current bridge are a deterrent to efficient shipment of our crops.

I am strongly supportive of the Port of Hood River's efforts to secure \$5 million from Oregon this session. This funding would match a \$5 million federal BUILD grant, \$5 million from Washington state (confirmed), and \$1.25 million from the Port to fund the \$16.25 million total cost of Phase 2 of this vital project.

Thank you for your consideration.


Ed Weathers, President
Duckwall-Pooley Fruit Co.