



Replacing the Hood River Bridge Can't Wait

2023 Policy & Budget Request

This investment is critical to the Columbia River Gorge's economy, safety and resiliency.



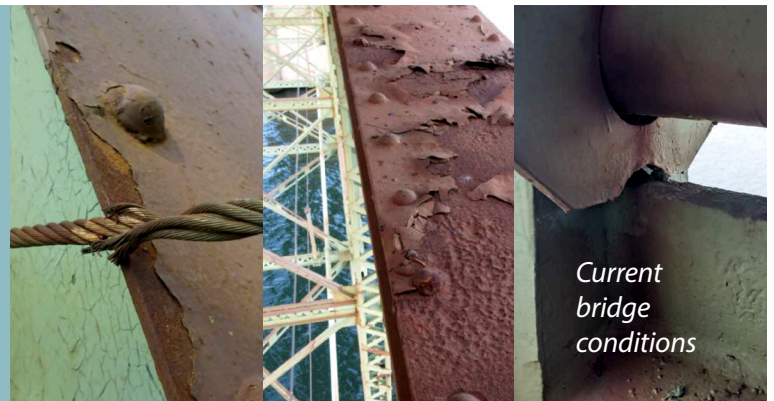
Support SB 431 for \$125 million from Oregon to construct a new bridge.

The Hood River-White Salmon Bridge was just rated a six out of 100. It is a critical connection for our bistate Gorge communities and is functionally obsolete and structurally deficient.

For commerce, it is a vital link between the agricultural heartland and the ocean ports in the Pacific Northwest. For locals, it is an essential link for daily access to jobs, childcare, school and medical services.

Vital to a thriving bistate economy

- **4.5 million** trips across the bridge annually.
- **3 million tons** of wheat and barley, and significant amounts of petroleum and wood products are transported along the river annually.
- **55%** of bridge users are Washington residents and **45%** are Oregon residents.



Our current crisis

Not built for today or the future. With narrow lanes, weight restrictions, no shoulders, hazardous barge navigation, and no bike or pedestrian path, the bridge does not meet our current needs and impacts disadvantaged communities.

The FHWA rated the bridge a 6 out of 100 for resiliency in 2022. It is at the end of its serviceable life and the Port of Hood River estimates it needs nearly \$100 million to repair and maintain the bridge in its current state.

Can't accommodate the region's growing economy. The bridge is weight and size restricted for modern freight trucks. This means that standard freight trucks must detour at least 50 miles to access the interstate highway system resulting in time and money lost for local businesses.

A navigational nightmare for marine freight. The bridge is the most challenging passage for marine barge operators on the Columbia River. This slows down the movement of freight resulting in time and money lost.

A critical emergency link. The bridge is a critical regional link during emergencies such as the Eagle Creek Fire in 2017. It's also the fastest way for Washington residents in the Gorge to access life-saving medical care like giving birth or surgery in Oregon.

A seismic disaster. The current bridge will not withstand a major earthquake. If this happens, the Washington communities in the Gorge may be cut off from emergency services and aid from Oregon.

What can the Legislature do right now to ensure the Gorge's economic vitality, safety and resiliency?



Support SB 431 for \$125 million from Oregon to construct a new bridge.



Strong bistate support for a new bridge

The **Port of Hood River** and the **Bistate Working Group**, an intermediary discussion body made up of elected officials from mid-Columbia region, currently manage bridge replacement efforts. In 2023, a new bistate government agency, the **Hood River-White Salmon Bridge Authority** will manage the project and will own and maintain the new bridge after completion. This new agency's board of commissioners will have equal representation from Oregon and Washington allowing decision-making power on the new bridge for both sides of the river.

There is strong support for replacing the current bridge from many of Washington and Oregon's elected officials, business and community leaders, environmental groups and Native nations in the Gorge region.

Where we are now & next steps

We are actively working with ODOT and regional Tribes to complete the Environmental Impact Study and Tribal Memorandum of Understandings. The project team expects a Record of Decision (ROD) in early 2023, which will complete the planning process.

With the \$75 million Move Ahead Washington grant, we will be able to move forward with a Progressive Design Build contract in late 2023. Pending funding, the new bridge should be in place by the end of 2029.

New bridge design & benefits

- **Fully accommodate freight.** Removing weight and size restrictions will reduce shipping delays and support a thriving economy.
- **Safer navigation.** The new design will accommodate multiple marine freight vessels safely.
- **Seismically resilient.** This will ensure the bridge will remain a critical connection for the Gorge during a major earthquake.
- **More equitable and accessible.** New separated bicycle and pedestrian facilities will increase equity, access and tourism.
- **Environmental benefits.** A storm water collection system will eliminate direct runoff from vehicles into the Columbia River.



City of Bingen

