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- Klickitat County*
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- City of Camas*
- City of Washougal*
- City of Battle Ground*
- City of Ridgefield*
- City of La Center*
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The Honorable Chris Gorsek, Co-Chair
The Honorable Susan McLain, Co-Chair
The Honorable Brian Boquist, Co-Vice Chair
The Honorable Shelly Boshart Davis, Co-Vice Chair

RE: Support Funding for Bridge of the Gods Seismic Strengthening (SB 815)

I am offering the following comments on behalf of the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (RTC), the state’s designated MPO/RTPO serving the counties of Clark, Skamania and Klickitat. These comments are offered in support of SB 815 with recommendation for its success.

RTC, in collaboration with government agency partners from Skamania County, has been actively engaged in the conversation and outreach with the Port of Cascade Locks, OR concerning addition of active transportation facilities, intersection safety, and future study of seismic and long-term improvements to the Bridge of the Gods. Maintenance of this nearly century old bridge is identified as a top regional transportation investment priority within the 2022-2027 Columbia Gorge Economic Development Strategy. Further, adding active transportation mode facilities to the bridge will fill a gap and enhance the Pacific Coast Trail connection and intersection safety at the bridge structure. A long-term seismic resiliency and enhancement strategy for the bridge is needed now.

In 2022, RTC supported the Washington and Oregon State legislature’s adoption of SSB 5558 and HB 4089-1, respectively, which provided the enabling authority for communities abutting the Hood River-White Salmon Bridge and the Bridge of the Gods to form a bi-state governing and funding entity. Since then, Washington and Oregon agencies party to the Hood River-White Salmon Bridge have worked diligently to prepare for a bi-state bridge authority. Going forward, partners should consider forming of a bi-state working group to advance the study and development of the project into the future.

RTC supports this \$6 Million OR state investment, and we understand the WA legislature may be considering the same. As proposed, SB 815 makes a prudent investment of resources in this essential bi-state asset, fostering a long-term strategy for upgrade and enhancement of the Bridge of the Gods.

Sincerely

Matt Ransom
Executive Director