
March 24, 2023

Subject: Support for HB 3301 and HB 3323 – Funding Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge Project

Dear Chairs McClain and Gorsek, Vice Chairs Boquist and Boshart-Davis, and Members of the Joint Transportation Committee:

Thank you for taking the time to review my written testimony in support of House Bill 3301 and 3323, to fund the first earthquake resilient river crossing in downtown Multnomah County and Portland, the Burnside Bridge.

My name is Cassie Davis, and I am writing as a 10-year resident in Oregon, a woman-owned DBE business owner, and someone that has worked on large infrastructure projects for the past decade, including the Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge.

I don't need to reiterate the facts stated by my County Chair and Commissioner Jayapal Thursday night, March 23rd at the Legislative Hearing around the magnitude of impacts and devastation to our state should an earthquake occur and we don't have an immediately usable bridge in the core of our State's biggest city and economic driver. They are, astronomical, and will impact every individual and all communities in our state. Building a resilient Burnside Bridge will have resounding positive effects.

What I want to reflect upon is when I think about the days and weeks following the earthquake, my mind goes to the news. What will the news portray after the devastation? ...a city severed, as if an island, with the closest river crossing miles away? Images of our most vulnerable community members that currently reside on the westside of the bridge trapped downtown and emergency responders challenged to get to people in need? ...Or, will the news show a strong and resilient beacon of safety, transport, and emergency response, The Burnside Bridge, funneling people and resources to aid in disaster relief, to reunite families, to help businesses reopen more quickly...a story of resiliency? ...or a story of failure?

Another item I'd like to highlight are the many jobs (over 4,000) that will be provided by the construction of this pivotal bridge. More importantly, the number of these jobs that will go to emerging small and disadvantaged businesses, women, minorities, and people of color. I, myself, an emerging women-owned business owner have had the opportunity to work with and for Multnomah County. In fact, by contracting opportunities with the County, empowerment by County staff and resources, I was able to start my own small business. The County has an outstanding track record for supporting our disadvantaged community members and seeing that dollars spent stay within our community.

The issue at hand here is not whether this bridge is needed, but finding the funding to ensure such an instrumental bridge is built within a timely manner. Each year that passes makes the cost of the bridge go up and the need for funding more challenging. Each year that passes, the threat of the massive and devastating Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake gets even closer. I strongly urge you to put this bridge and all the people that will be impacted by it at the top of your priority list, by supporting House Bill 3323 and 3301.

Thank you and sincere regards,

Cassie Davis

Owner/Manager
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