



April 26, 2023

Co-Chair Senator Lew Frederick
Co-Chair Representative Susan McLain
Joint Committee on Transportation

Dear Co-Chairs Frederick and McLain and Members of the Committee:

Duckwall Fruit, our 103-year-old family business operating in Hood River, Oregon, supports a multi-modal I-5 bridge that will move people and goods safely and efficiently. We must replace the bridge now to address the vulnerability of the two structures to seismic activity. The new bridge also must move people and goods efficiently even as our region continues to grow.

We urge you to pass HB 2098 for these reasons:

- The current bridge is functionally obsolete and highly vulnerable to earthquake damage.
- The bridge is not adequate for current transportation needs, much less future needs. Traffic on the bridge suffers from heavy congestion from seven to 10 hours on most weekdays.
- The bridge is vital to the region's economy. More than \$70 million worth of freight crosses the bridge every day.
- The bridge lacks adequate pedestrian and bicycle access.
- The Legislature must approve \$1 billion for the project to remain eligible for \$3 billion in federal funding for the project.

And for us specifically, Portland and Seattle serve as our transportation hubs and virtually 100% of our transportation system must cross this congestion filled bridge, empty or full, to get to Hood River to load over 114,000,000,000 pounds of our fresh packed pears annually. Duckwall Fruit only packs approximately 30% of the region's pear tonnage, so the overall amount is much greater! Our highly perishable product simply cannot wait.

We support the replacement of the I-5 bridge and urge you to pass HB 2098.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ed Weathers".

Ed Weathers
President, Duckwall Fruit