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April 26, 2023

Joint Committee on Transportation  
Senator Lew Frederick, Co-Chair  
Representative Susan McLain, Co-Chair  
Senator Brian Boquist, Co-Vice Chair  
Representative Shelly Boshart Davis, Co-Vice Chair  
Committee Members

Re: Support for HB 2098

The Interstate 5 bridge connecting Oregon and Washington is an immensely important piece of infrastructure for our state. More than \$70 million of freight crosses the bridge every day, making it a vital component of our economic health. However, the bridge has reached its lifespan and it does not meet current—let alone future—demand. With federal resources available through recent infrastructure bills passed by Congress, the time to replace the I-5 bridge is now.

As one of the largest Chamber of Commerce in the state, we urge you to support funding for an adequate replacement to the interstate bridge and support HB 2098. Our concerns with the current bridge are many but include vulnerability to seismic activity and the age of the structure. But our biggest concerns are related to freight movement.

Our region is located equidistant to Seattle and San Francisco, and there is an enormous amount of commerce traveling I-5. Inconsistent rail service statewide requires the movement of freight by truck in and out of our region, and that requires a structurally sound, well maintained, and adequate to the need, interstate system. The bridge as it stands today is a potential choke point for these goods, causing economic stressors all the way up and down the state.

We respectfully request funding for Oregon's share of this project, which benefits our entire state. Washington has committed its \$1 billion, and Oregon lawmakers need to identify our state's \$1 billion share to leverage those federal investments. That funding proposal, which contains no new taxes or revenue but instead uses the state's existing bonding capacity is included in HB 2098

Eli Matthews, IOM  
President & CEO  
The Chamber of Medford & Jackson County