



April 27, 2023

Co-Chair Senator Lew Frederick
Co-Chair Representative Susan McLain
Joint Committee On Transportation
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: House Bill 2098

Dear Co-Chair Frederick, Co-Chair McLain and Members of the Joint Committee,

On behalf of Vigor, I am writing to urge you to support the legislature's passage of House Bill 2098.

As you know, Vigor is a diversified industrial business headquartered in Oregon, with significant operations in the Portland metro region, including on both sides of the Columbia River and near the Interstate Bridge facility. The impact of the Interstate Bridge on our business ranges from employees needing reliable transportation across in both directions; the movement of our products (much of which is in support of national defense and critical infrastructure), and access to the marine highway beneath the bridge to and from our Vancouver facility at Columbia Business Park. Our customers and suppliers rely on the bridge in much the same way. This bridge is part of the lifeblood of our region and Vigor is one of many businesses which rely on it in numerous ways every day.

Unfortunately, due to the lack of prior action, users of the current Interstate Bridge put their safety at risk each time they use it, given its vulnerability to a major earthquake. The bridge is also inadequate for many transportation needs. Still, losing this critical transportation route would create major difficulties not just for our region, but for much of the economy of the west coast. It is vital we replace this bridge with a safer, more reliable structure.

Oregon must act now to ensure federal funding for this critical infrastructure project. The Legislature must approve the \$1 billion for this project called for in this legislation to keep it on track, as Washington did in passing similar funding last year. We are competing against other major critical infrastructure projects across the country for limited federal funds and delay increases the risk our region will not be chosen for funding.

We urge you to pass this legislation to fund the Interstate Bridge and help to solidify our region's competitiveness for the next century.

Sincerely,

Benton Strong
Senior Manager, Public Affairs
Vigor