



Legacy Health
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April 27, 2023

Joint Committee on Transportation
Oregon Legislature
Salem, Oregon

Re: HB 2098 – Funding I-5 Bridge Replacement

Chairs Frederick and McLain and Committee Members:

Legacy Health has deep concerns about the safety issues posed by the antiquated I-5 bridge connecting Vancouver and Portland. Legacy Health is a nonprofit health system that serves patients and communities from Silverton, Oregon to Vancouver, Washington. Our integrated network includes primary care and specialty clinics, partnerships in urgent care centers, and nationally recognized community hospitals. We understand that good health encompasses more than just clinical health care, and that is why we urge you to support HB 2098.

As an organization committed to being the safest place to give and receive care, we are concerned about the significant safety issues with the current I-5 bridge. The bridge has no traffic shoulders, a site-impairing hump design, and an extremely narrow path for bicycles and foot traffic. These issues are compounded by the fact that crash rates increase three to four times during bridge lifts, making the bridge even more dangerous. As a result, we frequently see patients injured in vehicle crashes on and near the bridge in our Emergency Departments on both sides of the river.

We are deeply concerned for the safety of our patients who cross the I-5 bridge daily, often in moments of crisis and emergency, as well as our providers and staff who cross the bridge at all hours to provide vital care for our patients. The current antiquated, substandard bridge compromises our ability to move patients, staff, and equipment in a safe and efficient manner. A new I-5 bridge that eliminates bridge lifts will provide a higher measure of travel predictability between our two states, which is essential for our communities who need access to care in a safe and timely manner.

We urge you to support HB 2098 to fund and construct a replacement to the I-5 bridge as soon as possible. Delaying this project puts our safety at risk, and that price is simply too high to ignore any longer. We believe that moving forward with the replacement of the I-5 bridge will improve the safety of our communities, patients, providers, and staff.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Correia

President and Chief Executive Officer, Legacy Health