



A&M Transport

P.O. Box 310
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April 27, 2023

Joint Committee on Transportation
HB 2098

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

Please accept this letter as written testimony in support of HB 2098 – I-5 Bridge Funding.

I'm the CEO-Manager of A&M Transport located in Glendale Oregon. A&M Transport is a 120-truck operation transporting general commodities throughout Oregon, Washington, California, Nevada, and Arizona and employees 150 full-time employees. In 2022, A&M trucks crossed over the Columbia River approximately 4,600 times with 60% of those trips on the I-5 bridge system.

I think that we're all aware of the failed CRC project that spanned from 2005 – 2013 and the disappointment that ensued when this project didn't come to fruition and now, we have an opportunity to "right the wrong". Although there are a few that seem to think there isn't a need to replace the current bridges, I feel very strongly that the IBR is absolutely necessary for several key reasons. First, according to ODOT engineers, the current structures most likely wouldn't stand up to a seismic event if/when we were to experience one here in the Pacific Northwest. Yes, the I-205 would be available but the gridlock created by downsizing to 1 freeway/bridge would create a congestion scenario that would be unprecedented in the Portland area. Second, the current bridge system is not sized correctly in respect to lane width and emergency shoulders and is not safe. Third, the freeway system approaching the bridge from either side is not designed correctly as it relates to numerous exits and on-ramps and needs to be redesigned to minimize congestion that is caused by traffic converging on and off I-5. This concern is addressed in the proposed IBR project.

I want to point out an event that closed down I-5 just north of us in Washington for 4 days, that many have most likely forgotten about but should consider when debating HB 2098. On December 3, 2007, a significant amount of rainfall fell in SW Washington in a short period of time and caused a massive flood in the Cowlitz and Chehalis Rivers which resulted in the closure of I-5 at WA MP77. For trucks or cars bound for places north of Centralia/Chehalis, there was no way around except for a 440-mile detour. Fortunately, the inconvenience was short-lived but think of the impact if the current I-5 bridge system was to experience a structural event. The inconvenience and the time to correct the issue would be significant.

For the reasons that I've laid out above, please consider moving forward with the passage of HB 2098 and the 2 amendments.

Thank you and best regards,

Andrew Owens
CEO-Manager