

**MAXINE E. DEXTER, MD**  
**STATE REPRESENTATIVE**  
DISTRICT 33



## **HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**To: Members of the Joint Committee on Transportation**

**Date: May 4, 2023**

**Subject: Comments Regarding HB 2098**

Co-Chairs McLain and Frederick, Vice Chairs Boshart Davis & Boquist, members of the committee:

For the record, my name is Dr. Maxine Dexter, and I am honored to be the State Representative for House District 33, which includes NW & Downtown Portland, Linnton, and Cathedral Park.

I'm here to testify about HB 2098, the Interstate Bridge Project bill to express both my concerns as well as my clear desire for the bridge to be successfully and appropriately replaced.

We need a new bridge. We also need to take action this session. I have concerns about the source of funding to pay for Oregon's portion of the bridge replacement being general obligation bonds.

As you may know, I have the privilege to serve as Chair of the House Committee on Housing and Homelessness. This session we are taking major steps to address our housing crisis which has been decades in the making. We need to build housing and to build affordable housing we will need significant bond capacity. Currently, the -2 and -4 Amendments of HB 2098 asks for \$1 billion in General Obligation Bonds which will oblige General Fund resources to back the bridge at the potential expense of other priorities that have no other revenue streams to fund.

I agree with what I understand Governor Tina Kotek to be saying - we should back the bonding of this bridge with our State Highway Fund dollars. This ensures that we have money for the massive investments in affordable housing that we're going to need to ameliorate the impacts of the housing crisis we are facing in every corner of this state. Funding the bridge entirely with General Obligation bonds in a time when we know we will need ongoing investments in housing and infrastructure for decades seems short-sighted. I believe we need a more fiscally responsible alternative.

Furthermore, we need to manage our resources so we can support other essential bridge infrastructure. There are 700 seismically vulnerable bridges across the state, these are disproportionately represented in my district and I want to make sure we have resources to get all members of my community out of harms' way in a crisis. We absolutely need to replace the interstate bridge but building a right-sized structure in a phased approach will help us make sure we still have the resources we need to invest in our other bridges. The **\$1 Billion Burnside Bridge**

**Seismic Replacement** is in my district and has been identified as a significant regional priority to have a Willamette river crossing that will withstand a significant earthquake. The Burnside Bridge project has had strong leadership from the county for project labor agreements and a strict cost cap - it's a model for building a bridge using union labor and staying on budget. I hope we can build an Interstate bridge with similar values and fiscal accountability.

Thank you for your service, your time and your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maxine Dexter', written in a cursive style.

Representative Maxine Dexter, M.D.  
House District 33  
*NW & Downtown Portland, Linnton, & Cathedral Park*