

May 5, 2023

Senate President Rob Wagner
House Speaker Dan Rayfield
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street
Salem, OR 97301

Local infrastructure serves Oregonians who rely on that infrastructure for their day to day lives, economic vitality, and social connection. Local roads and bridges are highly integrated with state roads, highways and bridges. Maintaining both on and off system assets at the same rate is key to preserving a safe, reliable, and efficient statewide transportation system that serves people where they live and when they travel. As the Interstate Bridge Replacement project advances, three locally owned bridges, that are major assets for our statewide transportation system, must also receive funding this session: the Hood River-White Salmon Bridge, the Burnside Bridge and the Bridge of the Gods. Together the bridges represent a geographically diverse group seeking state investment through a local bridge package for a total biennial allocation of \$56 million this session.

Hood River-White Salmon Bridge

- 2023-25 Biennium: \$30 million
- Total requested state investment: \$125 million

The Hood River – White Salmon Bridge is a critical link spanning the Columbia River to connect Oregon and Washington in the heart of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. Opened in 1924, the bridge’s travel lanes are just over 9 feet wide, with a 2022 Sufficiency Rating of just 6 out of 100, the bridge has exceeded its safe and useful lifespan. For safety reasons, bicycles and pedestrians are prohibited from crossing the bridge, leaving no other crossing opportunities along a 44-mile stretch of river between the Bridge of the Gods and The Dalles. One of only three bridges spanning the Columbia River in the region, the bridge connects rural and largely disadvantaged communities on both sides of the river and provides critical access to federally designated tribal fishing sites at the north end of the bridge. It is essential to the local communities and the region. A \$125 million investment with a \$30 million allocation in the 2023-25 biennium, along with funding from Washington state, would allow the project to complete the final design phase and help attract more federal funding.

Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge Project

- 2023-25 Biennium: \$20 million
- Total requested state investment: \$250 million by 2030

Located in the heart of Multnomah County and the state’s most populated metro region, the Burnside Bridge is a 97 year old bridge that was built long before Oregon was aware of the risks associated with a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake. A new Burnside Bridge, which will be the only east-west river connection in downtown available immediately after an earthquake, will increase the resiliency of the I5 corridor. The future-ready design will accommodate multi-modal transportation for the next 100 years.

A \$20 million investment for the 2023-2025 biennium would allow the project to advance to 60% design by the end of the biennium and help attract more federal funding.

Bridge of the Gods

- 2023-25 Biennium: \$6 million

The Bridge is a vitally important link for the Oregon and Washington bi-state region. Since 1926 the Bridge has provided reliable and safe passage for passenger and commercial traffic and has played a key role in helping the Columbia Gorge region develop a strong economy. Located in Cascade Locks the Bridge also enables tourists and visitors to access the world-class recreational attractions of the Gorge. A \$6 million investment for the 2023-25 biennium would make it possible to perform some site work to make needed improvements as identified by the analysis, as well as prepare for needed strengthening of the Bridge structure, in preparation for adding a safe passageway for pedestrians and bicyclists to cross over the Columbia River. This critical investment by Oregon will enable to the Port to leverage similar funding from the State of Washington.

Taking this opportunity now to invest in state and local infrastructure simultaneously will have a positive impact on Oregon's transportation system for the next 100 years. Please support HB 3622, which funds these past-due local infrastructure projects for the next biennium.

Sincerely,



Hood River-White Salmon Bi-State Working Group



Port of Cascade Locks



Multnomah County Board of Commissioners

Cc: Ways and Means Committee Co-Chair Elizabeth Steiner
Ways and Means Committee Co-Chair Tawna Sanchez
Joint Transportation Committee Co-Chair Lew Frederick
Joint Transportation Committee Co-Chair Susan McLain