



April 27, 2023

TO: Members of the Joint Committee on Transportation

FR: Sharla Moffett, Oregon Business & Industry

RE: HB 2098

OBI is a statewide association representing businesses from a wide variety of industries and from each of Oregon's 36 counties. In addition to being the statewide chamber of commerce, OBI is the state affiliate for the National Association of Manufacturers and the National Retail Federation. Our 1,600 member companies, more than 80% of which are small businesses, employ more than 250,000 Oregonians.

OBI believes that replacing the I-5 bridge is the most important transportation infrastructure project in Oregon and we support the -2 amendment of HB 2098.

The current bridge is failing to efficiently serve the more than 140,000 vehicles and more than \$70 million in freight that cross the bridge daily. Heavy congestion persists for seven to 10 hours every day, imposing heavy costs on bridge users. These include personal impacts like reduced family time, financial costs associated with the delayed delivery of goods and environmental costs from idling vehicles.

Interstate 5 is the most important freight highway on the West Coast, and the freight tonnage in the region is expected to double by 2040. Data from 2017 shows that bridge congestion results in cost impacts of a quarter billion dollars annually. We must replace the bridge to meet current and future demand in moving people and goods between Oregon and Washington.

Time is of the essence. Not only are the two spans at risk of collapse in the event of a major earthquake, which would be economically catastrophic to our state and region, but we also have generational funding available right now. Approximately \$3 billion in federal investments are available if we act quickly. Without this funding, Oregon and Washington simply cannot afford to replace the bridge with its estimated cost of \$6 billion.

Congestion does not serve the people or the economy of our region. The Port of Portland is a major West Coast port, and the I-5 bridge must be able to serve freight needs that stem from the substantial economic activity the port generates for Oregon. And, as our population grows, we must be able to efficiently move people via a new multi-modal bridge that will provide dramatically improved transit, bike and pedestrian options.

It is time to replace the bridge and commit to doing it now in order to access once-in-a-generation funds that are available now through the federal Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act.

We urge the committee to support the -2 amendment of HB 2098 so we can move forward with building a bridge that will accommodate the people of our region for the next 100 years.

Thank you.