

Mr. Steve Drahota, PE
5037 Parkhill St
Lake Oswego, OR 97035

May 12, 2023

Subject: HB 3622, Funding for Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge Project

Chairs Frederick and McLain, Vice-Chairs Boquist and Boshart-Davis, Members of the Joint Transportation Committee:

I am writing today to express my strong support for HB 3622, which would provide important financial support for Multnomah County's Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge project and other important local bridges in our state. As a practicing bridge engineer in Oregon, and a 19-year transplant from Southern California where I have seen the first-hand devastation and impacts to the lives of its millions of residents, I can attest that Oregon's aging transportation infrastructure has not kept pace with the seismic resiliency needs of our growing community today. Oregon, and especially the Portland-metro region, is totally unequipped to support our community after the major earthquake, which could hit at any moment. Our bridges are interconnected and play an integral role in ensuring a reliable and efficient statewide transportation system. Funding our local bridges now, especially those along Emergency Transportation Routes like the Burnside Bridge, is critical to the resiliency and sustainability of our growing and working community.

When funded, this project will play a critical role in community safety, response, and economic recovery after a major earthquake, provide numerous jobs in the Portland Metro Region, and move this region closer to its safety and multi-modal transportation goals.

Oregon's largest metro region and statewide economic driver currently does not have a downtown bridge that will be usable immediately after a major earthquake. The Pacific Northwest regularly experiences some of the largest earthquakes in the world along the Cascadia Subduction Zone (CSZ). Geologists estimate there is a one in three chance that a CSZ earthquake with a magnitude of 8+ will strike the Portland region in the next 50 years. **The data also shows the following startling facts about the last 40 CSZ earthquakes:**

- **82% of them have happened within the timespan of less than 300 years (WE NOW SIT AT 323 YEARS, which literally means that we are overdue and the EQ could happen at any moment.**
- **This devastating EQ averages a Magnitude 8.7, but could be as large as a Magnitude 9.1. This would make it the largest EQ ever recorded within the continental United States.**
- **Up to 10,000 fatalities could immediately occur, with more than 5,000 additional fatalities directly related to the lack of emergency service that you can reduce by providing the funding necessary to build a new Burnside Bridge. With the passage of this bill, you can make a direct difference and save hundreds or even thousands of Oregonian lives.**

Completion of Multnomah County's Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge project ensures that we have at least one downtown bridge that emergency responders can use after a major earthquake. Making the Burnside Bridge seismically resilient will improve the reliability of the nearly 19-mile Burnside St. regional Emergency Transportation Route, which stretches from Washington County to

Gresham across the heart of the metro region, and plays an instrumental role in the overall transportation system.

Along with future benefits following a natural disaster, the Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge project would improve mobility options by including safer and enhanced pedestrian, ADA and bicycle facilities and the opportunity to build a new streetcar line.

I implore your support of HB 3622, which supports the replacement of the current 97-year-old Burnside Bridge that has reached the end of its service life. This project will help protect the region and the state from the full impacts of a major disaster, foster its ability to recover after the earthquake and ensure that the region has a reliable and future-ready multi-modal bridge for the next century.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Steve Drahota", is positioned below the closing salutation. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "S" and "D".

Steve Drahota, PE