Submitter: Sharon Wood Wortman

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation

Measure: HB3622

I am the author of three editions of The Portland Bridge Book and have been studying and writing about bridges since 1984. I also traveled throughout Oregon three years for our state's Chautauqua program, sponsored by the Oregon Council for the Humanities. (I gave slide shows about Oregon's bridges in a number of communities.) My husband Ed Wortman, still a licensed civil engineer, and I served as members of a team that studied and wrote about some of the largest movable bridges in Oregon, the study sponsored by the Historic American Engineering Record and included in the Library of Congress. Today three of the central city bridges across the lower Willamette River are more than 100 years old, with two more turning 100 in the next three years, the Burnside among them — a century old in December 2026. It's only been recently that we have understood the earthquake risk hereabouts: Burnside — with a solid concrete deck and two swinging concrete counterweights weighing 2,000 tons — is guaranteed to collapse in in a subduction earthquake. The pile clusters holding up Burnside's main span consists of 380 Douglas fir tree trunks 40 feet tall! This despite Burnside is the bridge that's been designated the city's only Lifeline Corridor Bridge. In my most recent efforts to educate myself and stay abreast with what's happening with our bounty of bridges, I've been part of a community task force that's been meeting several times a year since April 2017. Our focus has been to get an earthquake-ready Burnside Bridge in place. For six years I've worried that we won't do so in time. According to the science and what we know now of our state's earthquake history, it's not a matter of IF there's going to be a major earthquake, but WHEN. I urge the Oregon legislature to direct state agencies to distribute monies to local entities for specified bridge projects, including the Hood River Bridge and the Burnside Bridge. Thank you.