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- Skamania County*
- Klickitat County*
- City of Vancouver*
- City of Camas*
- City of Washougal*
- City of Battle Ground*
- City of Ridgefield*
- City of La Center*
- Town of Yacolt*
- City of Stevenson*
- City of North Bonneville*
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- 14th Legislative District*
- 17th Legislative District*
- 18th Legislative District*
- 20th Legislative District*
- 49th Legislative District*

February 8, 2024

The Honorable Chris Gorsek, Co-Chair
The Honorable Susan McLain, Co-Chair
The Honorable Brian Boquist, Co-Vice Chair
The Honorable Shelly Boshart Davis, Co-Vice Chair

RE: This testimony is offered as: DO PASS for SB 1512 / HB 4110, with recommendation for its success.

On behalf of the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (RTC), a WA state designated MPO/RTPO serving the counties of Clark, Skamania and Klickitat, a DO PASS recommendation is offered.

RTC, in collaboration with government agency partners from Skamania County, has been actively engaged in the conversation and outreach with the Port of Cascade Locks, OR concerning addition of active transportation facilities, intersection safety, and future study of seismic and long-term improvements to the Bridge of the Gods.

Maintenance of this nearly century old bridge is identified as a top regional transportation investment priority within the Regional Transportation Plan for Skamania County (WA), and the 2022-2027 Columbia Gorge Economic Development Strategy. Further, adding active transportation mode facilities to the bridge will fill a gap and enhance the Pacific Coast Trail connection and intersection safety at the bridge structure. A long-term seismic resiliency and enhancement strategy for the bridge is needed now.

In 2022, RTC supported the Washington and Oregon State legislature’s adoption of SSB 5558 and HB 4089-1, respectively, which provided the enabling authority for communities abutting the Hood River-White Salmon Bridge and the Bridge of the Gods to form a bi-state governing and funding entity. Going forward, Bridge of the Gods partners should consider forming of a bi-state working group to advance the seismic strengthening study and development of active transportation and related project improvements.

RTC supports a \$6 Million OR state investment this legislative session, and we understand the WA legislature may be considering a matching investment in the future. As proposed, it is a prudent investment of resources towards advancing a long-term strategy for upgrade and enhancement of this essential bi-state infrastructure.

Sincerely

Matt Ransom
Executive Director