

**BEFORE THE JOINT SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION
AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - [HB 5024](#)**



18 March 2025

Co-Chair Senator Aaron Woods
C0-Chair Representative David Gomberg
Members of the Committee

Total support for HB 5024, noting that Ways and Means has no possibility of funding secure transportation infrastructure in Oregon, for infrastructure never built to current seismic compliances

Our concern:

Stated limitations on spending exclude federal funds, meaning federal funds are allowed to be added to permitted expenditures. But there will be none.

Congress knows that our states are unable to sustain infrastructure costs while legally obligated to balance state budgets.

Today we find that funds appropriated by the 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (\$739B) are impounded together with the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act funds (\$1.2T), illegally contradicting Congressional mandates.

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What DC attorneys say about IRA and IIJA funds

- Funds were blocked, then released for some appropriations
- No funds are being disbursed, State AGs have sued

<https://www.arnoldporter.com/en/perspectives/advisories/2025/02/funding-pauses-and-uncertainty-under-ira-and-iija>

What ODOT says about IRA and IIJA impoundments:

“Bridge funding provided under the IIJA is one of the types of funds for which all new obligations are on hold.”

<https://www.oregon.gov/odot/about/pages/federal-funding-eo-pause.aspx>

- This means that any critical fuels or rail infrastructure bills will not be funded, indefinitely
- These bills are on a death march to W&M

So, we need a bill to outlaw any Cascadia tectonic disasters until Congress can solve the Exec Branch holdups. \$\$\$\$ Holdups.

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What is the impact of these findings on Oregon Business and Development?

The predicted and inevitable tectonic megaquake will result in guaranteed infrastructure collapse for 90% of Oregon transport fuels. Bad for business.

Infrastructure needed in the aftermath of an inevitable Cascadia megaquake is not being prepared to survive:

- Washington State fuels pipeline to the Portland CEI Hub will fail 100%
- The CEI Hub will fail 100% from any M8 or M9 event
- No fuel resupply for Washington County with empty Hub tanker trucks
- Rail bridges for Washington County fuel resupply will fail 100%
 - Of 5 river crossings, 3 are >100 years old, none are seismic compliant
- Washington County cannot provide relief to 160 miles of devastated coast

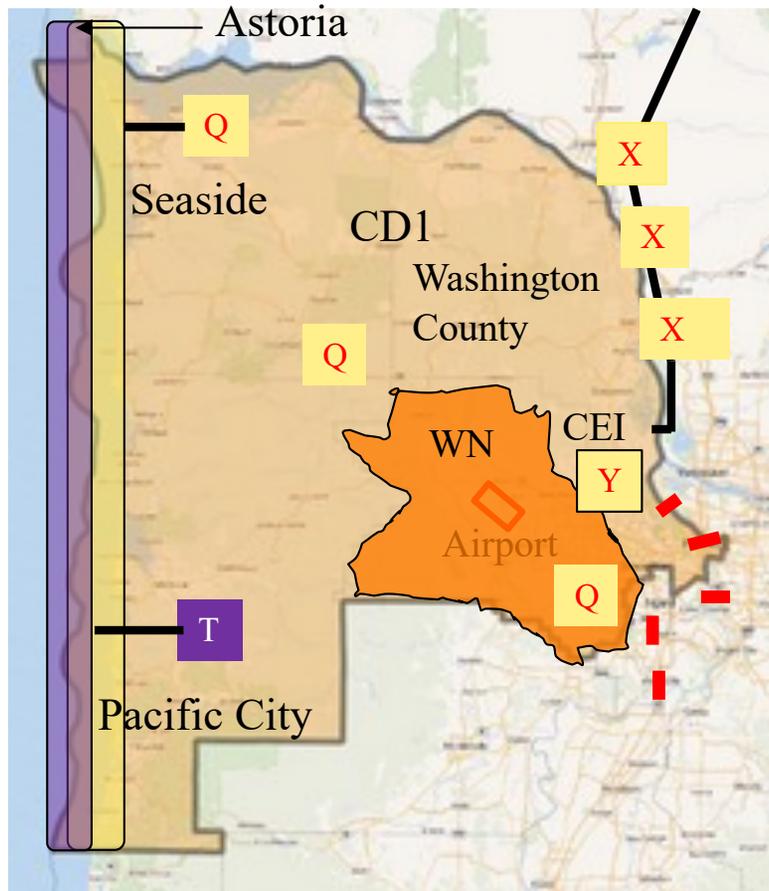
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No one is arguing that Washington County is not THE most threatened in Oregon for fuel insecurity. Population 598,000

First Congressional District on Seismic Day Zero – **and all at the same time**



- Failed rail bridges preclude fuel delivery
- X Olympic Pipeline failure
Strands Oregon
- Y CEI Hub collapse
Ends tanker truck logistics to CD1
- Q Quake collapse
Closes Columbia at Astoria Bridge
Damages coastal infrastructure
Extensive coastal road/bridge loss
Extensive utility damage
Damages Wash Co infrastructure
Damages bridges, maybe utilities
- T Tsunami
Re-damages coastal infrastructure
More coastal road/bridge loss
More utility loss

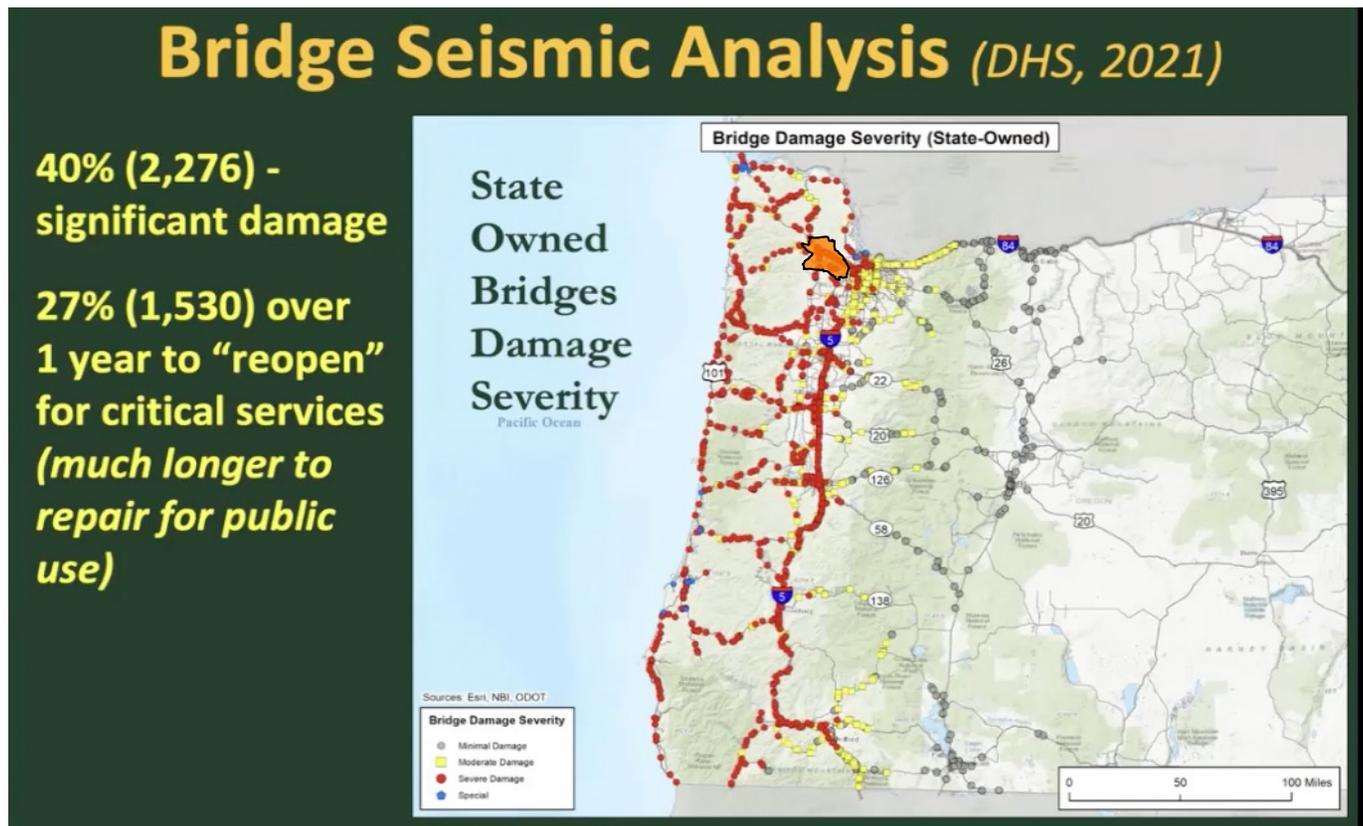
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DHS CISA has predicted the coastal conditions and consequences for Washington County highway bridge and overpass damage.

Argonne National Lab (CISA), Modeled 9.0



<https://publications.anl.gov/anlpubs/2021/09/170001.pdf>

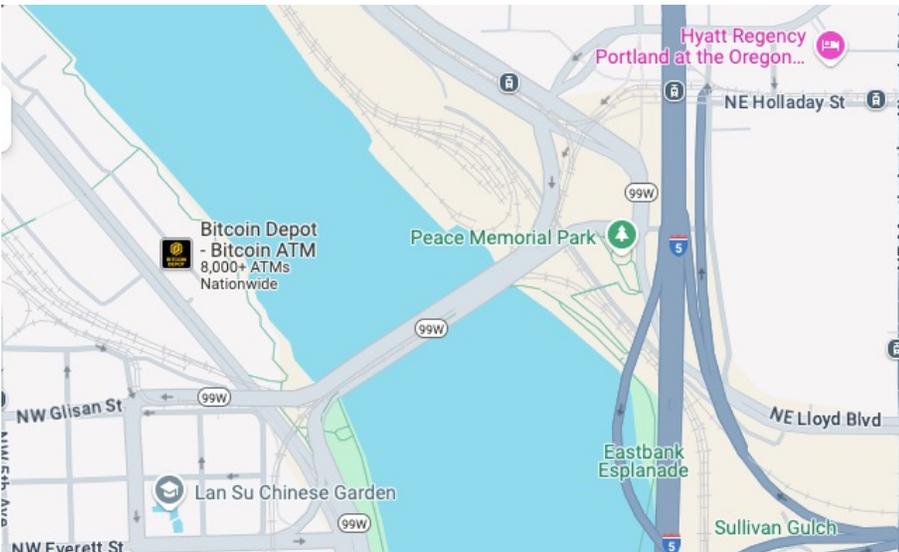
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Portland Steel Bridge
Freight rail lower deck



1912
Union Pacific
Cascadia threat discovered 2010
New approaches 1950
Age in 2024: 112 yrs
What are the retrofits?

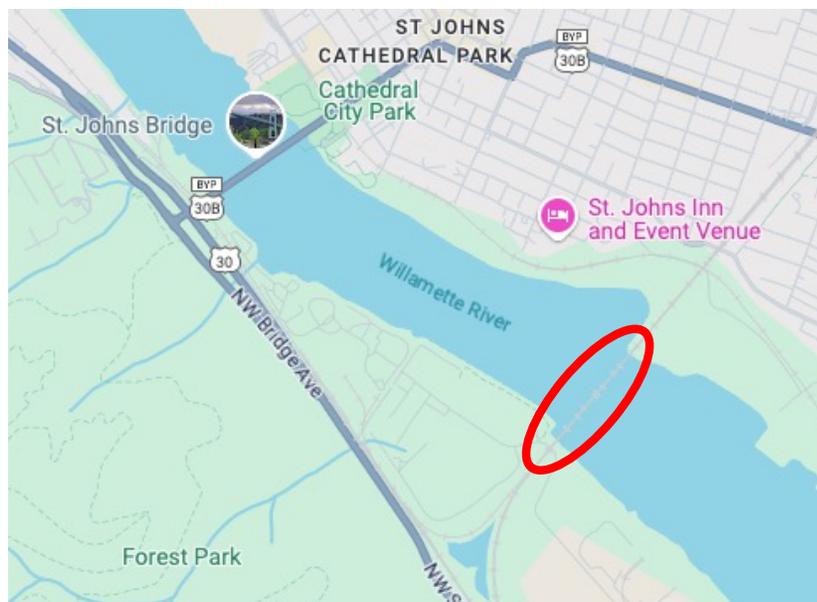
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BNSF Railway Bridge 5.1
St. Johns



Silver spans - 1908
Weathered rust – 1989
Cascadia threat discovered 2010
For approaches, age in 2024: 116 yrs
What are the retrofits?

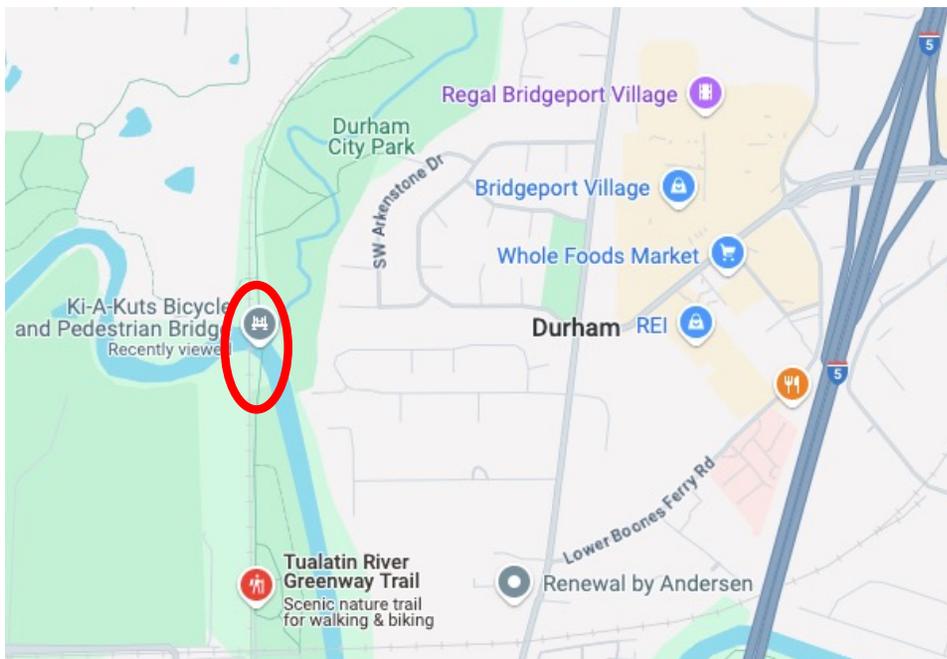
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Tualatin Railroad Bridge – Milepost 35.3



Prior to 1968
Portland and Western Railroad (PNWR)
Garden Home to Wilsonville Bridge
- Tualatin River
Cascadia threat discovered 2010
Age in 2024: at least 56 yrs
What are the retrofits?

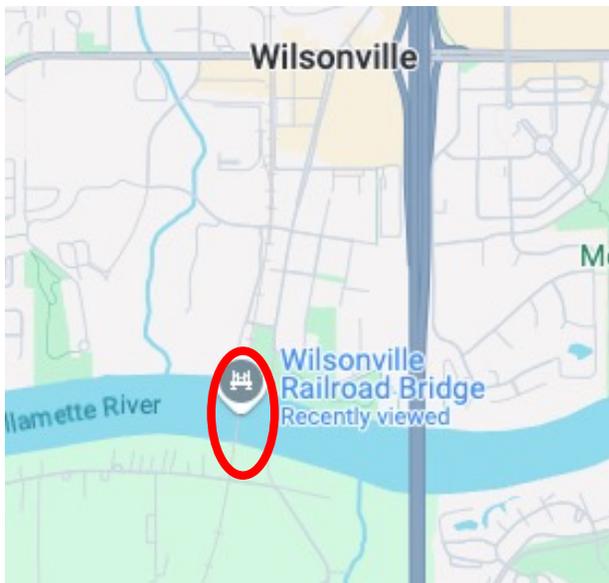
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Willamette Rail Bridge - Wilsonville



1975
Portland and Western Railroad (PNWR)
Cascadia threat discovered 2010
Age in 2024: 49 years
What are the retrofits?

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Oak Grove – Lake Oswego
Railroad Bridge



1910
Portland and Western Railroad (PNWR)
Cascadia threat discovered 2010
Age in 2024: 114 yrs
What are the retrofits?

PNWR acquired by Genesee and
Wyoming (GW) in 1995

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Alternate Fuel Sources to Oregon

Priority for Salem Ways and Means

- Infrastructure rebuild costs after the fact are at least 10x the cost of mitigation
- Waiting for post-event investment is a known inflation driver

National Institute of BUILDING SCIENCES™		ADOPT CODE	ABOVE CODE	BUILDING RETROFIT	LIFELINE RETROFIT	FEDERAL GRANTS
Overall Benefit-Cost Ratio		11:1	4:1	4:1	4:1	6:1
Cost (\$ billion)		\$1/year	\$4/year	\$520	\$0.6	\$27
Benefit (\$ billion)		\$13/year	\$16/year	\$2200	\$2.5	\$160
	Riverine Flood	6:1	5:1	6:1	8:1	7:1
	Hurricane Surge	not applicable	7:1	not applicable	not applicable	not applicable
	Wind	10:1	5:1	6:1	7:1	5:1
	Earthquake	12:1	4:1	13:1	3:1	3:1
	Wildland-Urban Interface Fire	not applicable	4:1	2:1	not applicable	3:1

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TABLE 1. Nationwide average benefit-cost ratio by hazard and mitigation measure. BCRs can vary geographically and can be much higher in some places. Find more details in the report.

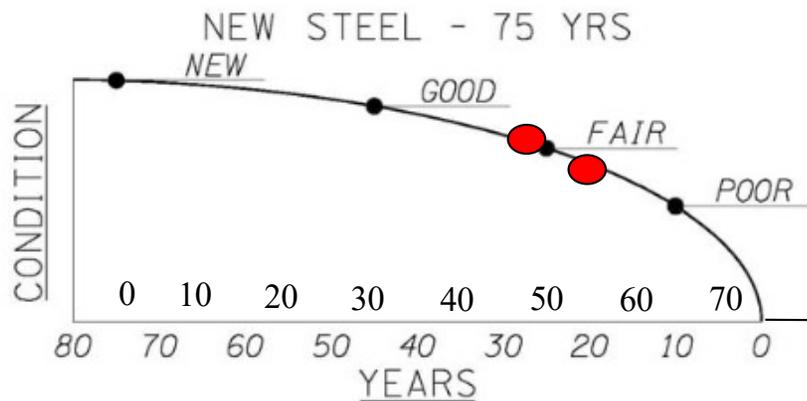
https://www.nibs.org/files/pdfs/ms_v3_adopts_earthquake.pdf

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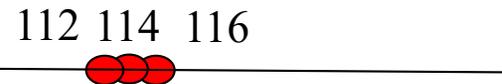


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OREGON RAIL BRIDGE ASSESSMENTS
FINAL REPORT OF STUDY FINDINGS



BNSF St. John's approaches: 116
 UP Steel: 112
 Tualatin MP 35.3: 56 +?
 Wilsonville: 49
 Lake Oswego: 114



Note: None of these bridges seem to be designed for seismic compliance



Lake Oswego approaches: 114



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Debt service costs are funded by this bill.

The likelihood of the Cascadia megaquake factors into Oregon bond ratings: more risk means more debt service cost. Oregon and Washington policymakers have adopted the 50-year risk math employed in civil engineering as design-to standards for bridges, buildings, other infrastructure projects that are designed for 50-year lifetimes.

As a way to assure public safety ? - Not a great idea. To protect the public we get a better idea of risk by looking at the 10,000-year Cascadia history and seeing what it means, starting with the last such event in 1700. The average event repeat interval is 246 years. This means the risk was 50/50 in 1946 – and higher today.

It is easy enough to check off all the historical repeat intervals that have already been exceeded by the quiet time since 1700. The total number of those exceeded in 2018 is 83%. This is not statistical math. It is middle school math.

If you run a time-sensitive lognormal model, you get similar numbers. Not good for bonds. Employing this math (80% chance of default) would not be very popular.

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Our testimony to the House Emergency Management Committee supporting many of their infrastructure bills has not been acknowledged or acted on. Example:

<https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2025R1/Downloads/PublicTestimonyDocument/134265>

We believe [HB 2749](#) is an example of another emergency bill that is on a death march to W&M (no possibility of federal funding). Expanding it to save Washington County and the coast is absolutely critical, and it would have no chance with W&M.

Q: Who in the Executive Branch as 6 bankruptcies and believes all FEMA claims can be carried by the States who by law must report balanced budgets?

Q: Is bankruptcy the new pandemic?

What is the Ways and Means survival plan considering the physical and financial stranding of Washington County and the coast before and after Cascadia M8 ?

Respectfully, Tracy Farwell, HD-46, Sustainability Desk, [Better Energy LLC](#)