

Submitter: Dale Hill
On Behalf Of: self
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2184

Members of the Joint Committee on Transportation:

I am a long time resident of Hood River County in the mid-Columbia Gorge. The Hood River-White Salmon Bridge replacement project is one I fully support as being urgently necessary and long overdue. I strongly urge you to vote in favor of passing this bill along to the entire House and for equal support in the Senate. If the bill does get to the floors of the House and Senate, I strongly urge you to vote in favor of this bill.

The current Hood River-White Salmon Bridge is completely and totally inadequate for its current use and purpose. The bridge is deteriorating rapidly with ever-increasing maintenance costs. The bridge needs these maintenance costs since the bridge is past its designed lifespan of 100 years. Numerous recent problems have surfaced including:

- * bridge deck welding fractures,
- *lift span problems,
- *seismic studies indicating the piers are not actually on bedrock,
- * concerns over harmonic stresses in bridge structures resulting in downgrading both load and speed limits, and
- * accidents due to very narrow traffic lanes.

All these problems are reported by the Port of Hood River Commission responsible for current bridge operation. Some have caused traffic closures which greatly affect both commerce and commuting traffic so critical to the economic vitality of the mid-Columbia Gorge region. The current Port is legally committed to using all bridge toll receipts in the future (after I believe July 1, 2026) for dedication to the bridge replacement construction project. Its current revenues aside from bridge toll receipts are totally inadequate for the ongoing and future, increasing maintenance costs. Finally, the State of Oregon lags behind the State of Washington in funding bridge replacement, to the extent that Washington has indicated any future payments they make will not be forthcoming unless Oregon matches the Washington commitments already made.

Taken together, all the factors enumerated above make it imperative that Oregon steps up to the plate and authorizes the funding at levels indicated in HB 2184. Equally important is the timeline shown in the bill for these payments to be provided: \$75 million in July 2025, and a further \$30 million in July 2027. Again i, I strongly urge your passing this bill at the prescribed financial levels and on the timelines

indicated for the benefit of the residents of the state of Oregon, and the essential economic well-being of those who live in the mid-Columbia River Gorge. Further delays will only add to the costs of the replacement due to inflationary pressures. The time is NOW for supporting this project. Thank you.