

Submitter: Austen Courpet  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2749

Written Testimony in Support of HB 2749  
Submitted to the Oregon Legislature's Joint Committee on Transportation

Dear Co-Chairs and Members of the Committee,

My name is Austen Courpet, and I have lived in the Cathedral Park neighborhood of Portland since 2015. I am writing to urge your support for HB 2749.

As a resident of Portland's north peninsula, I am deeply concerned about the lack of a viable emergency route out of Cathedral Park and St. Johns during a natural disaster—especially the anticipated Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake. Our current infrastructure is not sufficient. All existing bridges over the railroad cut and the Willamette River are expected to fail, cutting off thousands of people from emergency services, medical aid, food, and water—and tens of thousands more from access to their friends and loved ones.

This is not all just doom and gloom—there is something we can do to prepare. We have a real opportunity to prevent isolation and save lives, but we must act now. HB 2749 would allocate essential funding for designing a new bridge over the railroad cut on Columbia Boulevard—a critical next step in securing the needed infrastructure. We cannot afford to wait.

We are not a wealthy area, and we cannot fund this project alone. Yet we can plan, advocate, and move forward—if the legislature gives us the chance.

We are not a sacrifice zone. The North Portland neighborhoods of St. Johns and Cathedral Park deserve equitable access to safety and emergency response—just like any other part of Oregon. Passing HB 2749 would offer our community hope and a concrete step toward safety and resilience.

Thank you for your time and service to the people of Oregon.

Sincerely,  
Austen Courpet