

Submitter: Brian Laurent
On Behalf Of: St Johns North Peninsula Emergency Route
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2749

Members of the Joint Committee on Transportation,
I urge you to support HB 2749 and do your part towards protecting the people, businesses and entire regional population who are at risk from the dire consequences that failures of the escape routes will present in the event of the earthquake we know will happen and that's certain to occur, possible any day and likely within our lifetime. My family, friends and I live in St Johns. We're right across the river from massive fuel tanks expected to fail during the forecasted event. The fires, toxic smoke and other physical and chemical hazards we can expect, without resilient and efficient means to escape, present for us a doomsday scenario that looms over us every day and night. It doesn't have to be this way. Local citizens and activists have worked for years to get us to this opportunity to proceed in protecting us. You MUST play your part now to honor that work.

Have you ever seen a person burn alive? I have. I witnessed a person engulfed in flames at a gas station. It's not something you forget. Have you ever been in an environment where the air is unsafe to breathe? I have. In countless industrial facilities and sewer systems around Portland, I've worked within the confines of head-to-toe PPE. It's a claustrophobic experience that makes one appreciate the ability to breathe without a full-face respirator. Have you ever been subject to an airborne hazard and required to shelter in place? I have not; not yet at least. I'm modestly prepared for this scenario. Nobody else I know keeps Tyvek suits and respirators in their emergency kit. I do not want to witness most of the people in my community perish. I do not want to be part of the worst mass casualty event every witnessed in the PacNW.

I want us all, we the people, living and working on the slice of land between the two big rivers, to have multiple routes along the main roads, the chance to escape from the fires and deadly air that we can expect in an earthquake. I want the first response to be assistance and rescue to those in need. I want the next response to be restoration of shipping and services to support the regional recovery. I don't want the days and weeks following the earthquake we know is coming to be recovering the dead bodies of my friends and neighbors. I want the logistics of the response to be about rebuilding, not managing the corpses of thousands of victims who probably didn't even know they were in danger.

You can help prevent this potential catastrophe. You can proactively facilitate the more rapid recovery of our region. Please hear this plea. This message comes on the heels of significant investments in assessment and planning. We need these projects

to proceed. Choosing anything other than support for HB 2749 represents and abdication of your responsibility and a conscious abandonment of your constituents and all of the people and commerce across the PacNW region that depends on our port facilities continuing to operate.

Thank you for considering this testimony. Please know that I'm speaking not just for me, my family and the people on my block. I'm asking you to support HB 2749 for the direct benefit of many thousands and for the related benefits of millions. Please support this bill so our emergency routes can be assured to survive the devastating event we know is coming.

Sincerely, earnestly, desperately, BL