

Submitter: John Cooper  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2749

I'm John Cooper, a resident of the St. Johns neighborhood since 2015. Since moving to St. Johns, I've been impressed by the independent, small-town feel of our somewhat isolated neighborhood, while being sometimes disappointed when it seems our remote Portland community has been overlooked by Portland's city government. I am sure that these oversights are unintentional, and I hope I can help convince you that funding the design of an earthquake-resistant bridge across the railroad chasm is a critical need to ensure that our Portland neighborhood does not become a unique disaster zone in the event of the major earthquake that could occur at any time.

The geographical placement of St. Johns on the peninsula between the Columbia and the Willamette, together with the deep canyons through which railroad lines run in our neighborhood, makes St. Johns uniquely vulnerable in the event of an earthquake disaster. Access, including emergency access and critical supply, is likely to be destroyed when the bridges that connect St. Johns with the surrounding communities are damaged by the quake. The current bridges are quite old and were not built to withstand a major quake. After that quake, as others have testified, St. Johns would be cut off by land from the surrounding area. Emergency crews will not be able to enter. Supplies will not be replenished. Suffering and death will be unmitigated.

Despite the budgeting challenges currently facing the city, planning for the effective maintenance of land access to St. Johns must be a priority for Portland's city government. To neglect this project would compound disaster and represent a shameful legacy for those responsible for city planning and infrastructure.

I urge you to pass HB 2749 out of committee and to support its passage. Thank you!