

Submitter: Emily Rawls
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2749

To the members of the Joint Committee on Transportation,

My name is Emily Rawls, and I am a resident of St. Johns. I am writing to express my strong support for the funding and construction of a seismically retrofitted bridge that will provide our community with safe and reliable access in the event of an earthquake or other emergency.

Our neighborhood is particularly vulnerable in the event of a major seismic event. Currently, our main access routes are not adequately prepared to withstand the kind of structural stress that a major earthquake would impose. Without a retrofitted bridge, residents—including families, seniors, and individuals with disabilities—could find themselves cut off from emergency services, evacuation routes, and critical supplies when they are needed most. I work outside of St. Johns and the thought of my 16-month-old being trapped with no way to get to him is anxiety inducing to say the least.

This is not just a theoretical concern. The proximity of our community to the Critical Energy Infrastructure (CEI) Hub along the Willamette River significantly heightens the danger we face. In the event of an earthquake, the CEI Hub poses an enormous risk of releasing toxic chemicals into the air and water. A rupture or failure at this site could result in a hazardous toxic cloud spreading into nearby neighborhoods—including ours—making swift evacuation not just a matter of convenience, but of survival.

The combination of potential structural collapse and environmental disaster demands urgent and proactive investment. A seismically retrofitted bridge is not a luxury—it is a necessary safeguard that will protect lives, reduce long-term costs, and improve community resilience in the face of future emergencies.

I urge you to prioritize and allocate funding for this critical infrastructure. Our safety depends on it.

Thank you for your time and attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

Emily Rawls