Submitter: Troy Parke

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation Reinvestment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2025

We strongly oppose House Bill 2025 due to its support for the $7 billion Interstate Bridge Replacement (IBR) project. The IBR's lack of seismic justification, insufficient oversight, risk of cost overruns, failure to consider cost-effective alternatives like an immersed tube tunnel, inadequate traffic solutions, and threats to Hayden Island and historic sites demand reconsideration of HB 2025's funding approach.

1. Unsubstantiated Seismic Vulnerability Claims

The IBR relies on the seismic vulnerability of the existing I-5 bridge as a key justification, yet no comprehensive seismic study supports claims of imminent collapse in an earthquake. A $1 million Federal Highway Administration grant was awarded to e IBR in 2022 for a seismic analysis and geotechnical study, focused on Hayden Island, to support IBR's preliminary engineering. But there is no record of a seismic study being done since the grant was awarded, and a 2006 seismic study conducted as part of the Columbia River Crossing project, concluded that it is "technically feasible to retrofit the existing bridges to the current seismic safety standards" with estimated costs ranging from $88 million to $190 million dollars.

2. Insufficient Oversight and Cost Overruns

HB 2025 fails to address the IBR's cost overruns, which have plagued this project and similar mega-projects. Cost estimates have escalated from $3.5 billion to $7–9 billion. The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) has been criticized for overstating federal funds by $1.1 billion and mismanaging budgets, contributing to a $1.7 billion shortfall. While HB 2025 includes audits and an advisory committee, these measures do not ensure accountability for a project of this scale.

3. Failure to Explore Cost-Effective Alternatives

The IBR's "locally preferred alternative" is costly and inefficient compared to an immersed tube tunnel, which could be built faster, at a lower cost, and is expandable for traffic growth. The IBR fraudulently dismissed the ITT for their preferred bridge

using inaccurate data. The project's failure to seriously consider such options disregards opportunities to minimize financial and community impacts while achieving infrastructure goals.

4. Inadequate Traffic Solutions

There is little evidence that the $7–9 billion project will effectively alleviate traffic congestion, a primary justification for its development. Critics, including engineers, have pointed out flaws in the IBR's data and planning, suggesting that the project may not deliver promised traffic improvements. Without robust, evidence-based assurances that the IBR will solve congestion, the costs and community disruptions cannot be justified.

5. Community and Environmental Impacts

The IBR threatens Hayden Island with up to 15 years of construction, displacing residents and businesses, harming and harassing marine life and delicate fish run with 5 years of piling drilling, and ruining to the island's character. Historic sites along the I-5 corridor also face irreversible harm, with inadequate preservation plans.

6. Financial Burden via Taxes and Tolls

HB 2025's $14.6 billion funding package, including a 12-cent gas tax, higher DMV fees, and tolls on the IBR and potentially I-5/I-205, burdens Oregonians. Tolls disproportionately affect low-income commuters, and the bill's punitive toll enforcement via vehicle registration holds adds inequity. Hayden Island residents travel to Vancouver daily for groceries and appointments, and they unfairly face tolls up to $20.

We urge lawmakers to reject HB 2025 and pause the IBR until a seismic study is completed, cost-effective alternatives like an immersed tube tunnel are explored, robust oversight is ensured, and traffic solutions are proven. Protect Hayden Island, historic sites, and Oregonians from a costly, unproven project. We Vote "NO" on HB 2025 and demand transparency and accountability before any tax dollars are wasted for a projects that solves