



Port of Hood River

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1000 E. Port Marina Drive • Hood River, OR 97031 • (541) 386-1645 • Fax: (541) 386-1395 • portofhoodriver.com • Email: porthr@gorge.net

May 7, 2021

Senator Fred Girod, Co-Chair
Representative Paul Holvey, Co-Chair
Subcommittee on Capital Construction
Joint Committee on Ways and Means

Co-Chair Girod, Co-Chair Holvey and Members of the Committee:

We are writing to support the Port of Hood River's lottery bonding request to the Oregon Legislature for \$5 million to help fund Phase 2 of the Hood River/White Salmon Interstate Bridge replacement project. The current toll bridge is a critical link for our regional bi-state economy, but it is also functionally obsolete, weight-restricted and seismically deficient. If construction of the replacement bridge is not underway by 2026, the existing bridge will need \$50 million in repairs and rehabilitation over the next 15 years in order to remain safe and operational. Phase 2 of the bridge replacement needs to begin in 2021 in order to keep the project on schedule.

The bridge has over 4-million trips annually and is an economic driver for the mid-Columbia region:

- Both sides of the river are considered a singular region dependent on the bridge for economic, social and cultural purposes.
- Narrow travel lanes and the recent reduction in vehicle weight limit from 80,000 lbs. to 64,000 lbs. would be removed with bridge replacement.
- Lost tourism opportunity due to lack of bike/ped facilities.
- Lack of seismic resilience
- Current bridge is an unsafe choke point during emergencies, such as the 2016 oil train derailment in Mosier and 2017 Eagle Creek Fire.

The Port is thankful for the past funding support and appreciate your continued support for Phase 2. This funding would match a \$5 million federal BUILD grant, \$5 million from Washington state (recently confirmed), and \$1.25 million from the Port to fund the \$16.25 million total cost of Phase 2 of this vital project.

Thank you for your consideration.


John Everitt, Commission President


Michael McElwee, Executive Director