



January 10, 2026

Commander  
U.S. Coast Guard District Northwest  
915 Second Avenue, Room 3510  
Seattle, WA 98174-1067

**RE: Comments on the Interstate Bridge Replacement (IBR) Program Navigation Impact Report (NIR)**

Submitted via email: [d13-smb-d13-bridges@uscg.mil](mailto:d13-smb-d13-bridges@uscg.mil)

Dear Commander:

On behalf of the Southwest Washington Freight and Commerce Task Force, I am submitting this letter to **affirm support** for the Interstate Bridge Replacement (IBR) Program's **fixed span bridge configuration** option over the Columbia River with 116' of vertical navigation clearance.

The existing 109-year-old functionally obsolete structure and its precarious 1800-ton counterweight liftspan mechanism is at significant risk from an eventual Cascadia subduction zone megathrust. A damaged or collapsed bridge would devastate trade, including \$30+B that moves over the bridge by road, \$25+B that moves under the bridge by river, and billions more that moves under the bridge by rail mainlines. It also risks crippling the local economy of our Top-25 metro area, which interdependently relies upon movement of people, goods, workers and medical trauma patients across the river which serves as the state line. Improved sight lines, safety shoulders, merge lanes and active transportation options prepare this lifeline connection for the next century. The proposed **replacement structure also benefits existing and future river commerce by making it safer to navigate the dangerous S-curve** between the I-5 bridge and a private railroad-only bridge just a mile west.

We understand that formal Agreements have granted adequate mitigation for those few companies who depend upon a higher clearance for a portion of their commerce. Further, we note there is minimal additional economic or development opportunity offered by a lift span because the dredged 43-foot shipping channel stops to the west of the current I-5 bridge and there is virtually no shoreline land available for development upriver.

We appreciate the efforts of all involved in planning, design and funding of this critical transportation facility expected to last a century. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

**Sean Philbrook**, Coordinator  
SW FACT Coalition

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[admin@iccbusiness.org](mailto:admin@iccbusiness.org)