



January 7, 2026

Commander
U.S. Coast Guard District Northwest
915 Second Avenue, Rm 3510
Seattle, WA 981174-1067
Submitted via: d13-smb-s13-bridges@uscg.mil

Dear Commander,

It is critical to our region, state, and nation to replace the Interstate 5 bridge as soon as possible. The impacts of congestion, due in part to the existing moveable span, cause frequent delays leading to real and exponentially more costly impact our regional economic viability. On behalf of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG), I write to provide comments for the U.S. Coast Guard to consider for the General Bridge Permit for the Interstate-5 Bridge Replacement (IBR) project and to confirm the navigation needs of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers are met with 116' of vertical navigation clearance.

WAWG represents 1,800 members and depends significantly on the Columbia/Snake River system for wheat transportation. Approximately 90% of our wheat is exported overseas, making reliability essential to maintaining customer relationships. Any disruption to this reliability could adversely affect Washington Wheat Growers. We fully support the region's multi-modal transportation network, which offers safe, efficient, and dependable connections to competitive international markets.

We understand the IBR Program has worked closely with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to ensure the Corps' Dredge Yaquina can clear the bridge configuration at 116 feet to maintain the federal navigation channel and also to model anticipated changes in water levels affecting the river level over time. Stable and predictable flows help ensure the safety of the cruise vessels, crews, and passengers.

It is vital to ensure the multi-modal transportation system is integrated to keep supply chains moving as expeditiously and safely as possible. The IBR Program's extensive public

process to develop bridge configuration alternatives provided ample opportunity for technical review and engagement by stakeholders and balances the purpose and needs of the project while mitigating for impacts. We understand that the IBR Program's formal Agreements with entities determined to be negatively impacted by a 116' vertical navigation clearance for a fixed-span option have been granted adequate mitigation.

Communication and coordination are critical. As the IBR proceeds to demolition of the old bridge and construction of the new bridge, it will be very important to engage navigation interests and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to ensure that information about the phases of construction and any potential impacts to river traffic are clearly communicated far in advance.

As we understand it, the IBR configuration will allow for the tug and barge vessels to use the primary channel under the new bridge rather than the barge channel. The use of the primary channel will increase safety as the operators maneuver the vessels without having to make a sharp turn to clear the railroad bridge and then immediately line up to use the barge channel.

Safety and multimodal enhancements to meet the needs of all transportation modes as defined in the IBR Program's Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement will undoubtedly result in a positive return on investment.

We appreciate your consideration of our comments on the Interstate Bridge Replacement Program General Bridge Permit and confirm our navigation needs of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers are met with 116' of vertical navigation clearance.

Respectfully submitted,



Michelle Hennings
Executive Director
Washington Association of Wheat Growers

CC: Interstate Bridge Replacement Program (IBR)