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January 7, 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 LSW Architects, 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.

LSW Architects has proudly served Portland and Southwest Washington for over 70 years through innovative design solutions. We champion resilient communities by pursuing ideas, infrastructure and projects that add lasting value to neighborhoods on both sides of the Columbia River.

The I-5 bridge is the lifeline to our regional community and economy. The time is now to replace the antiquated and functionally obsolete I-5 bridge and improve its complex interchange network. Replacement is a far better option than pursuing seismic retrofit upgrades, deck replacement, painting and seismic improvements that otherwise would be required soon.

We appreciate the diligence of the IBR Program in studying multiple options to address the project's purpose and need while balancing many priorities. We believe our region is best served by a fixed span option allowing for a safe, practical and more cost-effective bridge design. 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.

With estimated construction costs rising by the day and congestion from the aging lift span continuing to impose real, escalating impacts on our economic viability, it is critical to our region, state and nation that replacement of the I-5 bridge begin as soon as possible.

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,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Esther Liu", with a long, horizontal, wavy line extending to the right.

Esther Liu AIA, LEED™ AP, NCARB  
President | CEO  
LSW Architects

