



January 7, 2026

Rear Admiral Arex B. Avanni
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

Dear Admiral Avanni:

On behalf of PeaceHealth, I am submitting this letter to express our strong support for the Interstate Bridge Replacement (IBR) Program's fixed span bridge configuration option over the Columbia River with 116' of vertical navigation clearance.

PeaceHealth is a non-profit, Catholic health system offering care to communities in Clark and Cowlitz County in Southwest Washington. PeaceHealth includes two hospitals – Southwest Medical Center in Vancouver and PeaceHealth St. John Medical Center in Longview - as well as numerous clinics and outpatient facilities, home and community services across several communities in the region. PeaceHealth employs more than 5,500 caregivers and has 1,489 employed and affiliated physicians and clinicians that provide thousands of inpatient and outpatient visits each year.

360-729-1000
peacehealth.org

400 NE Mother Joseph Pl.
Vancouver, WA
98664

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.

Peace
Health



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 the U.S. Coast Guard Northwest District, along with all individuals and organizations 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 blue ink, appearing to read "Michael Skehan", followed by a long horizontal line.

Michael Skehan
Chief Operating Officer
PeaceHealth Southwest Washington

cc: info@interstatebridge.org
admin@iccbusiness.org