

January 9, 2025

Commander Harris
U.S. Coast Guard District Northwest
915 Second Avenue, Rm 3510
Seattle, WA 98174-1067
Submitted via: d13-smb-d13-bridges@uscg.mil

Dear Commander Harris:

I write in support of the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) efforts to replace the aging Interstate Bridge across the Columbia River with a modern, seismically resilient, multimodal structure. As a key agency partner on the IBR Program, we would like to reiterate our support for a fixed span replacement bridge as it best balances all regional needs for river commerce, roadway commerce, transit operations, and roadway safety.

Interstate 5 (I-5) is one of the most important freight corridors in the nation, supporting national and international commerce, as well as local jobs and families. A replacement bridge that addresses the safety issues and crash rate that is three times higher than other facilities is crucial to improving the safety of families, workers, and freight. The existing bridge lifts hundreds of times per year causing traffic to back-up for miles and delays to the public, transit, and freight. A movable bridge would result in transit system delays when trains are stopped for bridge lifts. A movable span could disrupt operations for entire 18-mile segment when trains stop for a bridge opening.

The Coast Guard's decision on bridge height and approving a fixed span bridge is key to completing the federal environmental process and receiving approval to move to construction. Construction of the IBR Program is key to supporting continued growth of the economy and the increase in goods moved by freight. Construction of IBR Program investments will support tens of thousands of jobs in multiple industries and is expected to generate economic benefits nearly double the cost to build the program.

We appreciate your consideration of the local and regional support for the fixed span option.

Sincerely,


Jamie Snook
Executive Director of Capital Project Delivery
TriMet, Engineering & Construction Division

Cc: Sam Desue Jr, TriMet General Manager
Claire Khouri, TriMet Chief Strategy and Planning Officer
JC Vannatta, TriMet Chief Public Affairs Officer