

August 15, 2023

The Honorable Pete M. Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

The undersigned organizations support the Interstate Bridge Replacement Program's (IBRP) application for the National Infrastructure Project Assistance discretionary grant program and the Bridge Investment Program. The IBR program has made significant progress towards reaching the construction phase of the program. Having all non-federal matching funds committed in both Oregon and Washington demonstrates strong bi-state support to complete this critical multimodal investment.

The IBR program will replace the aging Interstate 5 bridge across the Columbia River with a modern, seismically resilient, multimodal structure. The Interstate 5 bridge is part of a critical trade route for regional, national and international commerce. Replacing the bridge will improve safety, congestion, travel reliability and freight delays. A bridge with multimodal travel options is a prudent and necessary investment in our region and in our country's economic and environmental interests.

In 2019, \$82 million in freight commodity value crossed the Interstate 5 bridge daily. Freight tonnage in the Portland-Vancouver metro region is expected to double by 2040, with 75% of total freight moved by truck. Replacing the Interstate 5 bridge and modifying adjacent interchanges will provide direct economic benefits by reducing congestion and accelerating freight movement.

Not only will replacing the bridge be necessary for our growing region and its economy, it also will create a once-in-a-generation economic opportunity. It is estimated that the IBR project will provide regional economic benefits of nearly double the cost of the project and thousands of jobs across multiple sectors.

The multimodal investments planned as part of the IBR program will greatly benefit our region through seismic resilience, improved safety for all users and a focus on travel options that increase equity and reduce environmental impact. Replacing the Interstate 5 bridge is the most critical transportation infrastructure project in the bi-state region and it addresses the need to improve safety and keep people – and our economy – moving into the future.

Thank you for your consideration.

