

Dear Members of the Oregon and Washington Bi-State Bridge Committee, and Program Leaders for the Interstate Bridge Replacement Project,

Thank you for your ongoing work to improve this region, including replacing the Interstate 5 Bridge. We write to you as concerned community groups who have been tracking the Interstate Bridge Replacement (IBR) Project. Our region deserves an equitable, climate-smart solution to the corridor's mobility challenges, but we have concerns over the current direction and scope of the IBR.

In an October 21st letter from Portland Bureau of Transportation Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty and Metro Council President Lynn Peterson to Bridge Program Administrator Greg Johnson, it is clear that concerns over the current direction and scope are shared by this region's leaders as well. **We want to echo PBOT's and Metro's critical requests around the need for design options, desired outcomes, transit analysis, and screening criteria, so the community can effectively assess replacement options.**¹

We ask that you address Metro Council President Lynn Peterson and Portland Bureau of Transportation Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty's requests outlined in their October 21st letter before any further decisions on the IBR project are made.

The signed community groups hold these core values and concerns with the project.

- **The IBR Project must be climate forward, which means:**
 - **The IBR project must to prioritize the efficient movement of goods and people:** by moving more people across the bridge, via transit and safe and accessible active transportation options, while moving the same or fewer cars (via pricing) and providing freight priority
 - **The IBR must support accessible and frequent transit:** such as light rail with the goal of increasing and supporting transit ridership in the long run.
 - **The IBR must not expand the number of vehicle travel lanes, including auxiliary lanes:** additional lanes will induce private vehicle demand and will increase climate emissions. Adding two lanes, for example, will increase emissions by adding 17.4 to 34.8 million miles of vehicle travel and 7.8 to 15.5 thousand tons of greenhouse gases per year.² We are deeply concerned that every iteration of the proposed bridge replacement designs includes the expansion of the existing right of way to include room for a ten lane freeway. Over 40% of Oregon's greenhouse gas emissions come from transportation, and increasing road capacity only increases the amount of congestion and idling cars in the long run.
 - **The IBR must use correct modeling for decision-making purposes:** Bridge leadership must conduct modeling for the desired future state of transportation travel as indicated by adopted regional and state plans and asked for by regional leaders,

¹ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1xldalvXd9vWnFqISOqZYdpsL9w6hulFy/view?usp=sharing>

² [10 Reasons to Not Trust ODOT's Environmental Claims](#)

including modeling for fully investing in transit capacity and access and congestion pricing, a coming policy that will have regional impacts.³

- **The IBR Project must be equitable:**
 - While the bridge serves as a critical economic corridor for the region, it most directly supports white and middle class commuters in Washington. Expanding lanes for private vehicles only further reinforces transportation inequities, and unnecessarily increases the total cost of the project by focusing on suburban drivers.
 - The project has emphasized diverse contracting on the construction of IBR but given the bridge could cost upwards of four billion dollars, IBR project leadership should be clear in the ways those dollars are being used to address climate change in frontline communities, and how the project will promote better outcomes for Black, Indigenous, and peoples of color, and those that are transportation disadvantaged.

- **There must be real design options with the projects, and stakeholders must be allowed meaningful and intentional opportunities to engage on the project.**
 - We are entering the second year of a global pandemic that has greatly strained individuals and community groups. IBR Project Leadership and legislative officials from both states need to be active in engagement and outreach, by giving community members the means to participate and providing them meaningful and impactful ways to engage on the project.
 - While there are focus groups and engagement committees, the process that IBR project leadership has defined is confusing, and makes it hard for stakeholders to understand where meaningful opportunities to engage are and how their input will be integrated in the bridge.
 - IBR Leadership must be transparent and provide easy to understand information to the public on the scope of options being considered
 - IBR Leadership should provide a clear timeline of decisions, points, and ways that people in the community can engage on the project.
 - IBR Leadership must provide clarity on how public engagement will and will not be incorporated into decision-making processes

- **Federal funds are not a limitation:** IBR project leadership continues to falsely claim that accessing federal funds necessitates moving the project forward quickly, and therefore relies on using old documentation and analysis. Not only is this false, and project staff need to stop repeating it as justification to move forward with the project, but it will bind this project to the failures of the CRC. So long as a jurisdiction picks a no build option, no federal funds have to be repaid, which has happened in multiple other instances across the state.⁴

³ Clark County Today: [Tolling and traffic analysis coming to Interstate Bridge program late next year](#)

⁴ [No deposit, no return: Another lie to sell the Columbia River Crossing](#)

Again, thank you for your work to advance the IBR Project. We also know the value in replacing this bridge, and want to support the right option for our region, its people, and its future. We strongly believe assuring our core values and concerns are addressed will make the project stronger, as well as by addressing the concerns raised by Metro and the City of Portland.

Signed,

Brett Morgan
1000 Friends of Oregon

Paxton Rothwell
Sunrise Movement PDX

Vivian Satterfield
Verde

Sarah Iannarone
The Street Trust

Chris Smith
No More Freeways

Ashton D. Simpson
Oregon Walks

Kari Schlosshauer
Northwest Safe Routes to School Partnership

Stephanie Noll
Oregon Trails Coalition

William Miller
Native American Youth and Family Center

Victoria Paykar
Climate Solutions

Marc Schlossberg, PhD
UO Sustainable Cities Institute

Nuhamin Eiden
Unite Oregon

Huy Ong
OPAL Environmental Justice Oregon

Nora Lehmann
Families for a Livable Climate

Doug Moore
Oregon League of Conservation Voters

Ashley Henry
Business for a Better Portland

CC:

The Oregon / Washington Legislative Bi-State Bridge Committee Leadership

Oregon Governor Kate Brown

Washington Governor Jay Inslee

Interstate Bridge Program Manager Greg Johnson

Brendan Finn, ODOT Urban Mobility Office

Metro Council President Lynn Peterson

PBOT Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty