

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

August 20, 2025

The Honorable Sean Duffy
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Duffy:

We are writing to express our support for the Hood River-White Salmon Bridge Authority's application to the Federal Highway Administration's Bridge Investment Program to construct a new bridge across the Columbia River.

The Hood River-White Salmon Bridge plays a critical connecting role in the Columbia River Gorge region for residents and visitors alike. Annually, around four million vehicles cross the bridge connecting Interstate 84 on the Oregon side and State Route 14 on the Washington side. For area residents, the bridge is an essential link for access to jobs, childcare, school, and medical services.

Built in 1924, the existing bridge does not meet modern needs and is nearing the end of its usable life. At just over nine feet wide, its two narrow lanes lack shoulders, hardly leaving two trucks sufficient room to meet. Its closely spaced piers are a collision risk for barges navigating the Columbia River, a critical freight corridor for agricultural exports from across the Northwest. Deterioration and weight restrictions often force trucks to reduce loads or reroute entirely, increasing costs for businesses. Emergency vehicles are frequently diverted to alternate crossings over 20 miles away, delaying response times during wildfires and medical emergencies. When the bridge is closed, families face 45-minute or longer detours to reach work, healthcare, and childcare and businesses face disrupted supply chains and the loss of customers. A new bridge is critical to the regional and national economy, freight and passenger vehicle safety, and families accessing essential services.

The new bridge will be built to modern standards with wider lanes and shoulders, weight capacity exceeding national norms, and improved navigational clearance for barge traffic. It has strong bipartisan local support, and both Oregon and Washington have committed their full match of \$125 million each to the project. The Authority has also secured preliminary approval for a Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act loan backed by bridge tolls.

In addition to previously secured federal funding, this request to the Bridge Investment Program will leverage significant local and state support and capitalize on strong ongoing project

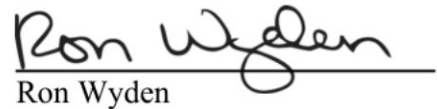
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momentum. A successful award will be the final piece of the project's funding package and allow construction to begin without delay.

We thank you for your full and fair consideration of the Hood River-White Salmon Bridge Authority's Bridge Investment Program application.

Sincerely,


Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator


Ron Wyden
United States Senator


Maxine Dexter
Member of Congress