



CITY OF
West Linn

February 27, 2019

The Honorable Elaine Chao
Secretary of Transportation
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Support for INFRA Grant Application to USDOT from Oregon Department of Transportation for I-205 Abernethy Bridge over Willamette River Project

Dear Secretary Chao,

The City of West Linn strongly supports the Oregon Department of Transportation's (ODOT) INFRA grant application to improve the Abemethy Bridge on Interstate 205 (I-205), a critical link on the regional interstate system providing a wide variety of economic benefits to West Linn, Clackamas County, the states of Oregon and Washington, and the nation as a whole.

The Abemethy Bridge is a well-documented bottleneck area, creating chronic congestion and delay, leading to significant negative effects on the environment, freight transportation and commerce between cities and across the state. I-205 is a major north-south corridor and carries an even higher percentage of trucks than I-5. High traffic volumes in excess of design capacity result in extended peak hour congestion and unreliable travel times for local workers and freight transportation leading to losses in productivity, higher transport costs, and, ultimately, higher costs to consumers.

Safety is a major concern for this Bridge. The vehicle crash rate in the project area is nearly three times the state average. Improvements to the Bridge will greatly reduce crash frequency through reduced merge movements, more on/off ramp spacing, and active traffic management.

The I-205 Abemethy Bridge is seismically vulnerable and will likely become non-operational following a Cascadia Subduction Zone event. This hazard is further intensified for West Linn as our primary drinking water source travels across the Bridge. As part of a designated post-disaster lifeline route and a critical link in both regional and national freight networks, it is critical this bridge remain in service in the wake of a natural disaster.

The City of West Linn resolutely believes the I-205 Abemethy Bridge project will provide significant benefits to regional economic development and freight mobility in addition to enhanced safety and agility for local commuters who rely on this vital corridor. This is an effective and efficient investment to keep Oregon and Washington moving, our economy running, and our citizens safe. We urge your support for this project, and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Russell B. Axelrod
Mayor, City of West Linn