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**Leader Helfrich Update on Hood River-White Salmon Bridge**

**HOOD RIVER, ORE** – Yesterday, a truck carrying improperly secured heavy construction equipment structurally impaired the Hood River-White Salmon Bridge after the arm of an excavator collided with the bridge going over the Columbia River. Initial reports indicate that the damage is severe including damage to the span lifts, the movable sections that raise the bridge to allow for the passage of tall water vessels, at an estimated 50% to 90%. Assessments conducted by outside engineering teams and the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) began yesterday and will continue today. Traffic across the bridge will remain closed until further notice.

“I’m thankful that no one was injured, but this accident and similar ones nationwide show how our aging infrastructure is becoming an increasing hazard to public safety and a drag on our economy,” said **Republican Leader Jeff Helfrich (Hood River)**. “My office is communicating with Governor Kotek’s administration and our fellow legislators in Washington State as we assess the damage and plot a course forward. Regardless, this shows that we must work on transportation infrastructure next year.”

The Hood River-White Salmon Bridge is a crucial piece of the economy for the bistate communities of the Gorge. There are nearly 4 million trips across the bridge annually and 3 million tons of wheat and barley, along with significant amounts of petroleum and wood products, are transported along the river each year.

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