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NEWS RELEASE

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I-5 BRIDGE HEARING SCHEDULED FOR WEDNESDAY

LEGISLATURE TO CONSIDER OREGON-LED, BI-STATE REPLACEMENT FOR UNSAFE, MALFUNCTIONING BRIDGE; LOOKS TO WASHINGTON STATE FOR PARTNERSHIP

SALEM- The House Transportation and Economic Development Committee will hold a public hearing on a proposed Oregon-led partnership with Washington State to replace the outdated Interstate-5 bridge. The issue has taken on increasing urgency after a letter from Governor John Kitzhaber made it clear that without action by the Oregon Legislature and Washington State, the project will be shelved.

“We can’t wait any longer or we will be stuck with an outmoded, unsafe bridge for another ten to fifteen years or more,” said House Speaker Tina Kotek (D-Portland). “Oregonians need us to work with Washington State to deliver on this top transportation priority.”

Oregon leaders have spent the last seven months vetting options for moving forward on the bridge replacement after the Washington Legislature failed to act last year. A series of financial and legal analyses have been completed in recent weeks which indicate a project would be prudent and feasible if Washington State delivers an intergovernmental agreement securing their participation in the project.

Legislators will take testimony on language that will be amended into HB 4113. If the Oregon Legislature does not succeed in approving the Oregon-led bi-state project by March 9, efforts to build a safe bridge across the Columbia may be stalled for a decade or more, due to lost federal funding.

The public hearing and work session will be at 3 p.m. Wednesday, February 12.

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