



March 7, 2019

Legislative Leadership
 Oregon State Capitol
 Salem, OR 97301

Re: I-205 Widening and Seismic Improvements Project

Dear Ways and Means Co-Chairs Johnson, Steiner Hayward & Rayfield, and Joint Transportation Committee Co-Chairs McKeown & Beyer,

As officials elected by and/or representing the residents of the Portland metropolitan region, we share an obligation to protect their safety and promote a healthy economy that is accessible to all. The health and safety of our region and our state are inextricably linked to the infrastructure that connects them. In our region, millions depend on Interstate 205 for that connection.

Thanks to HB 2017, the Legislature identified the I-205 bottleneck between Stafford Road and OR 213 as a signature congestion relief project for the state. With ODOT's subsequent investment of \$53.7 million for planning and design, the project is expected to be shovel ready in early 2020 at a cost of \$460 million. Unfortunately, under current plans, construction will be delayed until 2026 at

the earliest due to a lack of funding. And each year that we wait, the estimated project cost increases by \$15 million. **We believe it's our duty to act now to protect this important lifeline by funding these essential upgrades to I-205 in the 2019 legislative session.**

This project reflects several important values that Oregonians expect from their transportation system:

Safety – As a designated statewide north-south lifeline route, I-205 will be called upon to provide supplies and services to the region shortly after a disaster. Immediate action is needed to seismically upgrade the Abernethy Bridge and replace or retrofit eight additional bridges in the project area to withstand a major earthquake.

Economic opportunity – The federal government has designated I-205 as a High Priority Corridor in the Portland metropolitan area. It connects employers, the traveling public, and businesses to the Portland International Airport, the State of Washington, and numerous local jurisdictions. This corridor serves as vital infrastructure for the economic health of both the region and the entire State of Oregon.

Quality of life – When the Governor's Transportation Vision Panel met with communities statewide in 2016 seeking input on a transportation package, the public and businesses from all corners of Oregon sent a clear message on the need to address highway congestion in the Portland region, including the I-205 bottleneck.

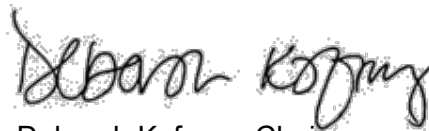
We can't let these critical capacity and seismic upgrades languish while waiting at least seven more years for new revenues. We must begin right away and ask the Legislature to find resources this biennium to enable the project to move ahead while honoring commitments made to other projects as part of HB 2017.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue and we urge your support for a funding solution in the 2019 legislative session to ensure that I-205 improves the quality of life of all Oregonians.

Sincerely,



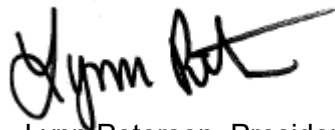
Jim Bernard, Chair
Clackamas County Board of Commissioners



Deborah Kafoury, Chair
Multnomah County Board of Commissioners



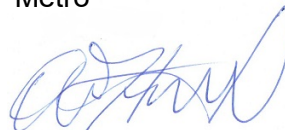
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Curtis Robinhold, Executive Director
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The Metro Mayors' Consortium