



## **Testimony by City of Wilsonville Mayor Tim Knapp Supporting SB 1021:**

### ***Proposed Legislation Advances Critical ODOT Project to Fix and Seismically Retrofit the I-5 Boone Bridge Traffic-Congestion Chokepoint***

Scheduled for public hearing on May 15, 2019, before the  
Joint Committee on Transportation

#### **Co-Chairs Beyer and McKeown and Members of the Committee:**

On behalf of the City of Wilsonville City Council, I am testifying in strong support of SB 1021, which directs the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) to advance the critically needed “I-5 Wilsonville Facility Plan” for Boone Bridge Southbound Auxiliary Lane and Seismic Resilience Retrofit Project. I also support a friendly amendment by Representative Courtney Neron to this bill that would appropriate \$3.5 million from state gas tax revenues to ODOT for project-acceptance development, including preliminary engineering and design.

The I-5 Boone Bridge, which traverses the Willamette River between Portland and Salem at Wilsonville, is one of the most traveled bridges in Oregon. Each day over 130,000 vehicles cross the I-5 Boone Bridge, which carries nearly as much traffic as the “CRC Columbia River Crossing” I-5 Interstate Bridge between Oregon and Washington states but 33% more trucks.

The I-5 Boone Bridge, located six miles south of the I-5/I-205 interchange, provides a vital link for commuters, freight commerce, and emergency services throughout the state, region, and the West Coast. However, the I-5 Boone Bridge is inadequate for current, growing traffic patterns and is in critical need of seismic upgrading to withstand a Cascadia 9.0 earthquake.

With the population and employment of both the Portland metro area and North Willamette Valley region rapidly increasing, severe traffic congestion due to a lack of adequate bridge capacity causes chronic slowdowns. Traffic back-ups commonly extend for five to ten miles in either direction of the Boone Bridge during daily commute hours and Sunday evenings, with up to 4.5 hours of daily congestion and evening commute speeds dropping to 25 mph.

ODOT, in collaboration with a \$50,000 grant from the City of Wilsonville, studied the flow of traffic on this portion of the South Metro I-5/Boone Bridge Corridor in 2018. The study assessed traffic patterns, such as busiest travel times and typical routes of travel, to determine a range of potential solutions and relative costs/benefits.

The “I-5 Wilsonville Facility Plan” concluded that the most feasible and cost-effective solution to the problem is to add a one-mile-long southbound ramp-to-ramp auxiliary lane on the bridge. The study determined that this proposal would maximize traffic flow by reducing accident-inducing lane changes and providing travel-through lanes. In essence, this project corrects a design deficiency when Oregon Route 99E connector Wilsonville-Hubbard State Highway 551 that serves Canby, Molalla and Woodburn merges with I-5 at the Boone Bridge.

Seismic upgrades are a critical component of the project. Currently, the Boone Bridge is not built to withstand a catastrophic Cascadia earthquake, jeopardizing the state’s and region’s ability to respond after a major seismic event. Traffic movement throughout the region and along the West

Coast’s I-5 lifeline would be crippled if the bridge were to become impassable, with the nearest Willamette River crossings located over 15 miles away in either direction.

Unlike some other highway auxiliary lanes proposed in the Portland area, public sentiment strongly supports ODOT’s proposed I-5 Wilsonville Facility Plan Boone Bridge project. A poll conducted during the project’s study-period showed strong public support for the auxiliary lane proposal, and the City of Wilsonville has identified I-5 Boone Bridge-related traffic as a top transportation priority to improve.


Many Wilsonville businesses have expressed concern over increasing traffic congestion at the I-5 Boone Bridge bottleneck that impacts travel and delays freight deliveries. Major employers of Wilsonville with substantial commuting employees and/or freight shipments include Siemens/Mentor Graphics Corp., Sysco Food Services, Collins Aerospace (fka Rockwell), Swire Coca-Cola USA, Tyco Electronics Medical Devices, Southern Glazer Wines & Spirits, Dealer Spike, DW Fritz Automation, Rite Aid Distribution Center, Campbell Soup’s Pacific Natural Foods, Owens & Minor, OrePac Building Products and Hartung Glass Industries.

Together with government agencies, Wilsonville’s 1,080 businesses provide 20,317 jobs, with nearly half of these positions in high-wage professional/technical or industrial occupations engaged in manufacturing, software, engineering and wholesale distribution. Total direct annual payroll by Wilsonville-based employers exceeds \$1.1 Billion—an 80% increase since 2000—that generates a total direct/indirect regional economic-multiplier impact of over \$3.2 billion per year.

To be competitive in the global economy, employers in Wilsonville seek to recruit and retain a skilled workforce from across the Portland metro and North Willamette Valley regions. Over 9 out of 10 Wilsonville-employed workers commute from residences elsewhere to jobs in Wilsonville.

Many of your constituents who travel the South Metro I-5 Corridor would appreciate your support of SB 1021. The City of Wilsonville respectfully urges a DO PASS vote on SB 1021 as amended above. Thank you.

Sincerely,

  
 Tim Knapp, Mayor  
 City of Wilsonville

**Residences of Wilsonville Workers**

<b>Clackamas County</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>5,486</b>
Wilsonville	9%	1,815
West Linn	3%	605
Canby	3%	605
Other	12%	2,420
<b>Washington County</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>5,689</b>
Beaverton	4%	807
Tualatin	4%	807
Tigard	4%	807
Hillsboro	3%	605
Sherwood	2%	403
Other	11%	2,218
<b>Multnomah County</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>2,844</b>
Portland	12%	2,420
Other	2%	403
<b>Marion County</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>2,235</b>
Salem	3%	605
Woodburn	2%	403
Other	6%	1,210
<b>Other Oregon locations</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>3,251</b>
<b>Out of state</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>813</b>
<b>TOTAL WORKFORCE</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>20,317</b>

SOURCE: US Census Bureau with 2017 PSU Population Center update