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January 15, 2026

Rear Adm. Arex Avanni
U.S. Coast Guard District Northwest
915 Second Avenue, Room 3510
Seattle, WA 98174-1067

Rear Admiral Avanni,

I write regarding the Coast Guard's forthcoming determination on the navigational clearance requirements for the proposed replacement of the Interstate (I-5) Bridge which connects Washington and Oregon over the Columbia River. I support the request from the Interstate Bridge Replacement (IBR) program for a determination for a fixed-span bridge with 116-foot vertical clearance because it is critical to contain construction costs and expedite the delivery of this critical infrastructure project.

There is no option for not replacing the I-5 Bridge. This bridge connects tens of thousands of people to jobs throughout Southwest Washington and the Portland, Oregon metropolitan area, and is an essential interstate link for regional, national, and international economies. But the bridge is built on wood piles in sandy soil, which means that as it stands, the bridge is at risk for collapse in the event of a major earthquake, which would devastate our economy and region.

A fixed-span bridge with 116 feet of vertical clearance would provide safe and reliable navigation for our river users while avoiding significant additional costs or construction time associated with a movable span. As I understand, formal mitigation agreements have been made for affected river users, and local folks agree that this is the best path forward to making sure this bridge gets built.

Pacific American maritime dominance is critical, particularly given the Pacific is the most likely theater of a future military confrontation. However, it would be short-sighted to sacrifice our current industrial economy in pursuit of a hypothetical future engagement likely to be dominated by drone warfare. Fortunately, there are 106 river miles west of the I-5 crossing, including the historic site of World War I era shipbuilding locations.

I fully appreciate the Coast Guard's responsibility to protect navigational safety and our maritime economy, and I am confident that this can be achieved with a 116-foot fixed-span clearance based on current and foreseeable maritime needs.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your continued partnership in supporting safe navigation and resilient, cost-effective infrastructure. Please don't hesitate to reach out for any additional information needed to complete your review.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'MGP', with a large loop at the end.

Marie Gluesenkamp Perez
Member of Congress