



For Immediate Release

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I-5 BRIDGE REPLACEMENT TO BENEFIT FROM EXPEDITED REGULATORY PATHWAY

VANCOUVER, Wash. – (April 10, 2019) – Lawmakers in Washington state took another step toward replacing the I-5 bridge today with the Senate’s overwhelming approval of a House-passed bill to expedite the application process for transportation projects of statewide significance. The bill now heads to the Governor for his signature.

The bill, ESHB 1994, cleared the Senate 41-5 after passage in the House 69-28 last month. The measure creates an expedited pathway for regulatory review of transportation projects of statewide significance, specifically the I-5 bridge. Qualifying projects alleviate congestion and improve travel reliability, improve freight movement, provide safety improvements, maximize economic development opportunities, improve transit, pedestrian and bike access, and serve as a critical defense route. The bill was introduced by Rep. Sharon Wylie, along with southwest Washington Reps. Paul Harris, Brandon Vick, Monica Stonier and Larry Hoff. An earlier Senate version was introduced by Sens. Annette Cleveland, Ann Rivers and Lynda Wilson, along with Bob Hasegawa and Patty Kuderer.

“This bill will assure an expedited regulatory pathway when there is a defined project and funding plan to replace the antiquated and accident-prone I-5 bridge,” said Ron Arp, president of Identity Clark County. “We thank our regional legislators and legislators statewide for taking this important step forward.”

In addition to this bill, Arp said both chambers have budgeted \$8.5 million to open an I-5 bridge replacement office in the new fiscal year beginning in July. He also applauded work by transportation leaders in the Senate and House for early work creating a transportation package inclusive of funding for the I-5 bridge.

Arp said replacing the I-5 bridge is the top priority for the Clark County Transportation Alliance, a consortium of more than 50 organizations that advocate for regional transportation priorities, and of the SW Freight and Commerce Task Force, a private sector coalition of more than 100 companies and groups.

Identity Clark County is a 25-year-old nonprofit organization comprised of about 90 influential business leaders who seek to strengthen our community. The privately-funded organization maintains an office in Vancouver and a lobbying presence in Olympia. More information is at www.iccbusiness.org.