



June 12 , 2019

Congressman Greg Walden,

Cc: Transportation and Infrastructure Chair DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves,

OneGorge is a coalition of local governments and private sector representatives in the bi-state region of the Columbia Gorge Scenic Area. OneGorge strongly supports federal action necessary to provide a waiver for the Port of Cascade Locks from Title 23 of the federal code for the construction of a Bicycle and Pedestrian lane to the Bridge of The Gods in Cascade Locks, Oregon. The Bridge of the Gods is designated as a part of the Pacific Crest Trail system. The narrow 1926 era bridge is a key transportation and commerce link between Oregon and Washington in the Scenic Area. In recent years a significant increase in hikers and pedestrian traffic is creating significant public safety concerns as vehicles and pedestrians must share the same surface. Last year over 7000 hikers were recorded used the bridge. Attaching a lane to the existing bridge will alleviate this public safety concern.

Outdoor recreation is a strong and growing sector of our local economy in the Columbia River Gorge. The Gorge is truly a mecca for outdoor recreation enthusiasts who visit our area throughout the year to experience world class recreational activities from hiking and biking to snow, water and wind sports.

Adding a Bike/Ped lane to the Bridge of the Gods will provide a missing link in our local recreation infrastructure. The Columbia River Gorge is a destination for bikers who love to explore the road and trails throughout the area. The state of Oregon and the federal government are currently making a significant investment in building an iconic bike trail that will link Portland with the east end of the Gorge and significantly expand biking opportunities throughout the region. But when the trail is complete there will still not be a safe way for bikers to cross from Oregon into Washington as no bridge in the region is suitable to ride across safely.

OneGorge strongly believes that adding a Bike/Ped lane to the Bridge of the Gods will significantly improve public safety in the region and also provide a boost to our local recreation-based economy. We the undersigned, strongly support providing a waiver from the Title 23 requirements for toll facilities, so that the Port of Cascade Locks can be eligible for federal funding of this important project.

Sincerely,

The Undersigned, facilitated by OneGorge