



City of Stevenson

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7121 E Loop Road, PO Box 371
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November 17, 2022

Dear Washington Legislators,

The City of Stevenson is located along the Columbia River Gorge, 40 miles east of Vancouver. We are an interconnected region spanning two states and rely on the Bridge of the Gods to survive. It is an iconic crossing along the Pacific Crest Trail, and a legacy for our region in need of seismic retrofitting and preservation.

Let me paint a very real picture of what could happen to one of the Gorge communities if the safety issues with the Bridge of the Gods is not addressed.

After a large earthquake, rockslides and bridge collapses have closed highway 14. The Bridge of the Gods has also collapsed, leaving the Stevenson community stranded. There is no way in or out except by boat. Those injured or needing medical attention are only able to be treated by EMS stationed within the city as the routes to the hospitals are closed. The food in the grocery store has run out, the gas stations are closed and out of gas. The city's wastewater treatment plant is unable to get rid of the bio sludge, which is overflowing at the plant. Residents are not able to get to work and tourists the city relies on are not able to get to Stevenson. Businesses close, residents leave, and the city becomes a ghost town.

There are no guarantees this would happen, but God forbid it does. We deserve to do better for the public and our community. Our community pays tolls and supports the bridge with every crossing, yet the toll we would pay if the bridge failed is too much for us to bear.

When the 2017 Eagle Creek Fire blazed through the Gorge, Stevenson Fire Department assisted with evacuating the City of Cascade Locks. Evacuees were housed at the Skamania County Fairgrounds in Stevenson. The Bridge of the Gods was vital to that operation as I-84 was closed, and the community would have been stranded without it.

The Stevenson City Council strongly supports the Port of Cascade Locks request for funding for the vital seismic retrofit and preservation project for the Bridge of the Gods.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call me at (509) 427-5970 x 204 or contact me via email at leana@ci.stevenson.wa.us.

Sincerely,

Leana Kinley
City Administrator