

# Columbia River CROSSING a long-term, comprehensive solution.

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### [States, manufacturers finalize mitigation agreements on Columbia River Crossing](#)

Published 6/4/2013 2:00:00 PM

Published by the office of Washington Governor Jay Inslee on June 4, 2013:



States, manufacturers finalize mitigation agreements on Columbia River Crossing  
*Agreements protect jobs, promote regional economy*

OLYMPIA – Oregon and Washington departments of transportation have signed pivotal agreements with two Columbia River manufacturers whose operations would be affected by construction of a new I-5 bridge across the Columbia River. The agreements to mitigate those potential impacts are a crucial development in the effort to replace the aging Columbia River Crossing.

“Oregon Iron Works and Greenberry Industrial are vital partners in maintaining our state’s manufacturing sector,” said Washington Gov. Jay Inslee. “They depend on a navigable river as well as an interstate that carries goods and people safely and efficiently. Governor Kitzhaber and I are grateful for their partnership as we replace the I-5 bridge.”

In January 2013, the joint Oregon and Washington Columbia River Crossing project submitted a general bridge permit application to United States Coast Guard. The application described the economic and transportation benefits of the project and proposed mitigation for potential impacts on the fabricators’ navigation-dependent operations.

“Safe and reliable travel on I-5 is a crucial economic driver for both states, and we must do everything possible to build this bridge and remain competitive in this global marketplace,” said Oregon Gov. John Kitzhaber. “I’m pleased by the deliberative process the states and the businesses are undertaking to develop these agreements and bring us closer to construction.”

Shipments from the two companies could be affected by the proposed bridge, which will have a maximum height of 116 feet. The states have been in discussions with them, as well as a third manufacturer, to determine how to mitigate the potential impacts while protecting the family-wage jobs they generate. Details of the mitigation agreements will be released once the permit process concludes with a decision from the USCG by September 30, 2013.

“The leadership of Govs. Inslee and Kitzhaber has been a critical component of getting these agreements in place. The Oregon Legislature has done its job also, securing the funding for its share of the project,” said Washington State Senate Transportation Co-Chair Tracey Eide. “Now, it’s time for us in the Washington Legislature to do the same by passing a transportation package that ensures the safety of one of the nation’s most important bridges. The time to fund the I-5 bridge replacement is now.”

The aging I-5 bridges, built in 1917 and 1958, must be replaced to protect the drivers who make 128,000 daily trips across the span. The bridge is a critical component of the freight corridor that connects Canada to Mexico. More than \$40 billion in freight crosses the bridge annually.

Click [here](#) for more information about the plan to replace the bridge and keep Washington’s economy moving.

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### [Federal judge dismisses legal actions by Columbia River fabricators](#)

Published 3/14/2013 10:54:53 AM

Federal judge Marco Hernandez issued an order March 13, 2013, dismissing Thompson Metal Fab, Inc.'s National Environmental Policy Act lawsuit and denying the motion of Greenberry Industrial, Inc. to intervene in lawsuits brought by environmental and community advocacy groups challenging the CRC. The rulings represent a step forward in the federal and state agencies' coordinated defense of the project from legal challenges under NEPA.

*Thompson Metal Fab et al v. Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration* is part of three individual NEPA claims filed against the CRC project in 2012, which were all consolidated into one case in Oregon District Court. The federal attorneys representing FHWA and FTA filed a motion several months ago to dismiss Thompson Metal Fab's claim on the basis that its complaint alleged only economic harm, and not the environmental harm that NEPA addresses. Both Thompson Metal Fab and Greenberry are Columbia River businesses that fabricate large industrial equipment along the Columbia River east of the Interstate 5 in Vancouver.

Other courts, including in the Ninth Circuit, have dismissed or upheld dismissals of plaintiffs who alleged only economic harm to their business interests, rather than impacts to the environment, finding they cannot sue under NEPA. The federal judge agreed with the federal agencies, and concluded that Thompson must be dismissed for lack of standing. Standing is a legal term referring to an individual's personal stake in the outcome of the controversy or disagreement.

In addition, Judge Hernandez ruled that Greenberry's attempt to intervene in the case came well beyond NEPA's statute of limitations and was, therefore, denied. Greenberry did not sue prior to the July 2012 deadline, but instead moved to intervene several months after the other plaintiffs filed. The judge concluded that Greenberry's claim is barred by the statute of limitations, and also noted that Greenberry's claim suffered from the same flaw as Thompson's – it alleges only economic and not environmental harm that is addressed under NEPA.

The hearing schedule for the remaining claims is expected to be announced shortly.

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### [CRC submits General Bridge Permit application to U.S. Coast Guard](#)

Published 3/1/2013 1:42:15 PM

The Columbia River Crossing project submitted its General Bridge Permit application to the U.S. Coast Guard Jan. 30, 2013. The application is for a replacement Interstate 5 bridge with 116 feet of navigational clearance.

Within 30 days USCG will finish its completion review and request additional information if needed. Before making a permit decision, there will be an opportunity for public review and comment. The project schedule relies on a permit decision by Sept. 30, 2013.

The application builds from previous studies and analyses, including the project's [Navigation Impact Analysis](#) and [Economic Benefit Analysis](#). The bridge height included in the application was selected because it balances the needs of surface, river and air traffic and the communities on either side of the river. The permit application identifies and outlines measures to avoid, minimize and mitigate for negative impacts.

The application includes findings from vessel and economic analysis of river data:

- Almost 28,000 trips entered or exited the mouth of the Columbia River between 2002 and 2012. Of those, 18 could have been impacted by a 116 foot bridge.
- Between 2002 and 2012, the total Columbia River marine related average annual direct employment was over 14,000 full time jobs. About 80 were associated with shipments that could have been affected by a 116 foot bridge.
- About \$213 billion in total value cargo was shipped on the river between 2002 and 2012. Of that total, the combined value of the potentially height impacted work identified was \$179 million.

Under the protection of non-disclosure agreements, proprietary information from each of the fabricators also was used to understand their past work history and future work predictions.

To honor these disclosure agreements, the publicly-released permit application has redacted any proprietary information related to the business operations and individual mitigation discussions.

The application can be found online:

[Application cover letter](#)

[Application Attachments](#)

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### [Technical analysis produces 115-116 foot clearance for I-5 replacement bridge](#)

Published 12/10/2012 3:52:00 PM

Refinement holds landside impacts to 95-110 foot levels  
VANCOUVER – After substantial technical analysis of the impacts of an Interstate 5 bridge height between 100 and 125 feet, in five-foot increments, the Columbia River Crossing project has found that a bridge with a 115 foot vertical clearance reduces the number of vessels potentially impacted while minimizing additional community, environmental, freight and cost impacts. The technical analysis was prepared as part of the permit application to the U.S. Coast Guard, which must approve the bridge height.

The selected bridge height must balance the interests of river users, freight mobility, needs for flight paths over the bridge to Portland International Airport and Pearson Airfield, connections to downtown Vancouver, and cost and schedule of the project.

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### [Community members view information about bridge height analysis at open house](#)

Published 11/15/2012 3:44:07 PM

The results of a comprehensive analysis of various bridge heights for the replacement Interstate 5 bridge were shared and discussed at a public open house Wednesday, Nov. 14, in Vancouver. Over 130 community members attended the event to learn about the effects of various bridge height options. CRC analyses consider river use, vessel impacts, freight mobility, highway safety and efficiency, transit efficiency, landside impacts, aviation safety, economic impacts and costs associated with various bridge heights.



CRC staff will continue to refine the technical analysis on the number of vessels impacted, river users, costs and potential solutions. A bridge height recommendation is expected in December 2012. The bridge height recommendation will be central to the general bridge permit application to be submitted to the U.S. Coast Guard in January 2013.

Materials presented at the open house are available [online](#) and summarized below.

Project overview: Information about the project's goals and improvements

Bridge height history: Information about how CRC selected a mid-level (95-foot) bridge height

Analysis of Vertical Clearance, 100-125 feet: Vancouver and Hayden Island: Description of effects in downtown Vancouver and on Hayden Island, including automobile, bicycle and pedestrian access and circulation, and light rail grades and station elevation from different bridge heights

Analysis of Vertical Clearance, 100-125 feet: Replacement Bridge: Description of effects to highway safety and traffic speeds, freight mobility, airspace encroachment and bridge foundation sizes at different bridge heights

Analysis of Vertical Clearance, 100-125 feet: River Users: Description of effects to current and future river users, including conditions affecting river passage, vessels affected at different bridge heights and the process for addressing user impacts

Next Steps: Information about the project schedule and process with the US Coast Guard to apply for a general bridge permit

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