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April 29, 2009

Don Larson
Federal Aviation Administration
Regional Capacity Program Manager
Airports Division, ANM-615
1601 Lind Ave. SW, #315
Renton, WA 98057

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Columbia River Crossing

RE: I-5 Columbia River Crossing Preliminary Response to FAA Comments

Dear Mr. Larson,

Thank you for your comments submitted in a letter dated June 20th, 2008 on the Columbia River Crossing (CRC) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Your comments have been included with other agency, public, and stakeholder comments received during the official 60-day comment period that followed the Draft EIS publication on May 2, 2008. We will provide official responses to your comments, and others received during this period, in our Final EIS. However, we want to provide our initial responses and new information to FAA prior to that time.

As you may already know, following the close of the 60-day Draft EIS public comment period in July 2008, the CRC project's six local sponsor agencies selected a replacement I-5 bridge with light rail to Clark College as the project's Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA). These sponsor agencies, which include the City of Portland, City of Vancouver, TriMet, C-TRAN, Metro, and the SW Washington Regional Transportation Council, considered the DEIS analysis, public comment, and LPA recommendations from the CRC Task Force. As indicated in your letter, the selection of the replacement crossing reduces airspace obstruction as compared to the supplemental river crossing, and was therefore preferred by FAA.

In order to further define the LPA, CRC conducted a bridge type screening study to determine which replacement bridge types are technically feasible to advance for further study. For your information, attached is the Columbia River Bridge Technical Screening Study summarizing the results of this study. The CRC project staff, in coordination with the CRC Urban Design Advisory Group, is currently working to develop concepts for potential aesthetic features or treatments and have produced an Aesthetic Screening Study, which is also attached. These work efforts, along with additional engineering, will be incorporated into a Formal Type Study. The ultimate goal of the Formal Type Study is to narrow the field of options down to a single bridge type for study.

Once the bridge type is known, FAA Form 7460-1 will be completed and submitted for the design phase permit. The current schedule shows this activity occurring near the publication of the Final EIS. The Final EIS is currently scheduled to be published in 2010. As mentioned in your letter, Form 7460 will also be submitted by the contractor for construction activities.

Thank you again for your comments. Please do not hesitate to contact Lynn Rust or Heather Gundersen at (360) 816-2177 or (360) 816-2199 respectively, with any questions or comments.

Thank you,

Linda M. Zehke

for

R. F. Krochalis
Regional Administrator, FTA Region 10

Daniel M. Mathis

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for

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cc:

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