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COLUMBIA RIVER CROSSING DRAFT EIS  
PUBLIC HEARING

WEDNESDAY, MAY 28, 2008

RED LION HOTEL  
VANCOUVER, WASHINGTON

00033

1 TOM BUCHELE: Hi, my name is Tom  
2 Buchele. I'm with the Pacific  
3 Environmental Advocacy Center, which  
4 usually goes by the acronym PEAC, P-E-A-C.  
5 Our address is 10015 Southwest Terwilliger  
6 Boulevard in Portland.

7 PEAC submitted a letter to you all  
8 about a week ago asking you to extend the  
9 public comment period for this draft EIS.   
10 We learned late this afternoon that you  
11 had denied the request and I would like to  
12 talk about that and talk about the NEPA  
13 process, which we have heard mentioned  
14 here.

15 We are all still now in a process of  
16 going through the DEIS. We haven't been  
17 all the way through it, so I am not going  
18 to really say too much about the actual  
19 content of the document until I have fully  
20 reviewed it. I don't think it would  
21 really be fair to say too much.

22 We submitted this letter on behalf of  
23 13 organizations, including the Northwest  
24 Environmental Defense Center. I am here  
25 tonight specifically speaking for them.

00034

1           We were quite disappointed by the  
2 decision to not lengthen the public  
3 comment process. 60 days for a document  
4 that is this lengthy and detailed is just  
5 flatly inadequate.

6           My students and I drafted a  
7 five-and-a-half page detailed letter  
8 explaining why we thought the comment  
9 period should be lengthened. The response  
10 from you all was one page and did not  
11 respond to a single point that we made in  
12 the letter.

13          And I have to say that -- if that is  
14 indicative of the way you are going to  
15 respond to public comments on this  
16 document, I think we are all going to be  
17 very disappointed.

18          The DEIS comment period is the only  
19 time during the NEPA process where the  
20 Agency has to be respond specifically to  
21 the public's comments. It's unique and  
22 it's an important process. And again,  
23 60 days is simply not long not enough for  
24 a document that is this detailed and this  
25 lengthy.

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1           We pointed out specific and numerous  
2 examples where the Federal Highway  
3 Administration has extended the deadline  
4 for very similar projects. Again, you  
5 made no response to those points that we  
6 you made.

7           The purpose of NEPA as someone said  
8 is to stop and consider all the  
9 information that is available before you  
10 make a decision. It's a very good law.  
11 It serves an important purpose. And  
12 60 days is simply not long enough in our  
13 opinion.

14           I will say having started to look at  
15 the document, that the range of  
16 alternatives does seem to leave out  
17 certain viable alternatives including  
18 alternatives that don't increase car  
19 capacity. And the purpose in need  
20 statement seems designed to result in a  
21 bridge that does increase car capacity.  
22 We are looking under NEPA whether that is  
23 proper.

24           Thank you very much for allowing me  
25 to comment.

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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

STATE OF WASHINGTON )  
County of Clark)

I, Cathy S. Taylor, a notary public  
for the State of Washington do hereby  
certify that I transcribed to the best of  
my ability said proceedings written by me  
in machine shorthand and thereafter  
reduced to typewriting; and that the  
foregoing transcript constitutes a full,  
true and accurate record of said  
proceedings and of the whole thereof.

Witness my hand and notarial seal  
this 16th day of June, 2008.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Cathy S. Taylor, RPR, CSR  
Notary Public for the State of Washington  
My Commission expires April 15, 2009