

AIA Portland

A Chapter of the American Institute of Architects



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Columbia River Crossing

Kris Stickler
Columbia River Crossing
700 Washington Street, Suite 300
Vancouver, WA 98660

Signatories

David Partridge, AIA
President, American Institute of
Architects Portland Chapter

John Blumthal, AIA
President, American Institute of
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Timothy Buckley, AIA
President, American Institute of
Architects Washington Council

Kalina Kunert, Assoc. AIA
President, American Institute of
Architects Vancouver Chapter

Jenny Richmond, ASLA
President, Oregon Chapter of the
American Society of Landscape
Architects

Dear Mr. Stickler,

We, the undersigned, represent the leaders of the professional associations of Portland and Vancouver's design community. Our purpose in writing is to encourage you to use this opportunity to consider the enormous impacts the Columbia River Crossing will have on our region. We further ask that you elevate the conversation and scrutiny beyond the core considerations of engineering to include the human, artistic and symbolic impacts this structure will have. We are asking that the spiritual and aesthetic dimensions of this crucial connector be raised to be of equal concern to those of the functional solutions. Now, as the comment period for the Draft EIS draws to a close, is the time.

Your comments and those of the other public agencies in the region will define the key questions that the balance of the design process must answer in order to move forward. You have the opportunity to profoundly impact the quality of this crossing and the way in which future generations look back on what was done here. We stand ready to help you to define the important design, aesthetic, and cultural questions that must be asked. We understand that this project has had many contributors and extensive public process. But we are asking that as decision makers you condition your approvals with additional criteria and review processes recommended by the Urban Design Advisory Group.

If a bridge is built, it should be regionally significant and context sensitive. This bridge crosses the greatest river of the western United States. It can be seen from the moon. The Columbia is the lifeblood of our region and has demanded the greatest respect from all civilizations that have grown around it. It is a key piece of both the region's commerce and its tourism. We now have the opportunity to design a symbol of the connection of our two states, the region and our respect for the role it plays in our lives. We have arrived at the moment to transcend the engineering necessities and to create a powerful and unique linkage that inspires future generations. We are at the point in the process where the practicalities are understood. Now is the time to elevate the design to address the spirit of this connection by deepening the discussion and asking more of the project.

The CRC Urban Design Advisory Group already in place has our support. But only if it has your powerful endorsement and enthusiastic commitment can it assume the role it should play. As a collection of experienced design professionals whose long involvement here has helped to establish our reputation as one of the most livable communities in the world, we the undersigned, understand that without champions of good design no project realizes its full

potential. We ask that you let us help you raise the humane criteria of this project to the forefront. That is the role of the Design Community in this and every region of the country. The history and success of design in the metropolitan region as a generator of public support, development activity and responsible, carefully planned growth is well acknowledged. Help us to bring this level of professional insight to this visible and important project.

In the region all major projects benefit from inclusive and considerate design review. Now that preliminary engineering has identified several alternatives we ask that the process be focused to allow the design, aesthetic, and cultural dimensions of the project to take on an equal role to those of the engineering criteria. Deepen the review process. Require the agencies and consultants who are leading this design effort to make design as important as efficiency, cost and engineering. This can be accomplished within the current process only if local government makes it clear that design has their support and will be a key part of the ongoing review process. We want to help the Columbia River Crossing to be a new model of cooperation and sensitivity that resonates with our culture and long established values. This is not only a simple structure to carry vehicles. This could be an expression of our highest aspirations, central to the urban center that combines two great cities.

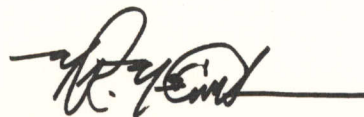
As experienced and deeply committed citizens with design in our blood we urge you to look again at this bridge and imagine how much more it could be. We all stand together to help you reach the highest goals for the CRC.

For further information, contact Sandra Stevens, Hon. AIA, Executive Vice President of AIA Portland, (503) 223-8757, sandra@aiaportland.org.

Sincerely,



Douglas A. Benson, AIA
Co-Chair, Portland-Vancouver
Design Professionals Task Force,
American Institute of Architects



Michael McCulloch, AIA
Co-Chair, Portland-Vancouver
Design Professionals Task Force,
Architecture Foundation of Oregon

cc: Mayor Tom Potter
Mayor Elect Sam Adams
Members of the Portland City Council
Mayor Royce Pollard
Members of the Vancouver City Council
Council President David Bragdon and Fellow Metro Councilors
Fred Hansen, General Manager, Tri-Met
Tim Leavitt, C-TRAN