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Columbia River Crossing

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June 23, 2008

Columbia River Crossing  
c/o Heather Gundersen  
700 Washington St., Suite 300  
Vancouver, WA 98660**RE: Columbia River Crossing Draft Environmental Impact Statement,  
Public Comment**

Dear Ms. Gundersen:

This letter is written to provide formal written comment from the Port of Ridgefield regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Columbia River Crossing project.

The Port of Ridgefield supports the Columbia River Crossing Project (CRC), because we believe it is in the public's interest to ensure adequate, reliable commuter and freight capacity on I-5 and the bridges that cross the Columbia.

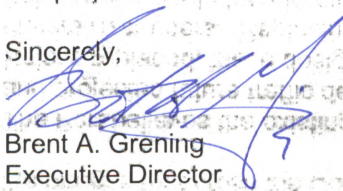
The Port believes the existing bridges are aged and were not designed to accommodate current and projected future traffic demand, environmental, safety and seismic engineering standards. Unless replaced, these design issues will continue to pose significant safety hazards for both drivers river users. Replacing the existing I-5 bridges would also enable the efficient flow of freight and people by addressing congestion, capacity and safety compromises that currently exist and will worsen over time.

The Port believes that public transit should be an integral component of the crossing design in order to accommodate and promote efficient, cost effective transit crossings that will meet the public's demand for transit well into the future. Retrofitting the capacity for Light Rail Transit onto a replacement bridge at a future date would be much more expensive and present many more engineering challenges than building the future capacity into a replacement bridge, and would be an inefficient use of taxpayer dollars. In the lifespan of the proposed new bridge, the extension of Portland's Light Rail Transit system into Clark County may prove to be in the public's best interest; however initial operation of light rail may not be required or desirable when the new bridge is opened.

Finally, the Port of Ridgefield supports thorough evaluation of necessity, timing and costs associated with specific project components (i.e. individual intersection improvements) prior to their inclusion in the construction schedule and cost estimates.

Thank you for your time and please include the Port of Ridgefield on correspondence related to this project.

Sincerely,

  
Brent A. Grening  
Executive Director