



U.S. Department  
of Transportation

**Federal Highway  
Administration**

June 20, 2008

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE.  
Washington, DC 20590

In Reply Refer To:  
HEPE

Mr. Joseph Cortright  
1424 NE. Knott Street  
Portland, OR 97212

Dear Mr. Cortright:

Thank you for your May 29 letter to Secretary of Transportation Mary E. Peters regarding the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) for the I-5 Columbia River Crossing (CRC) project. You were concerned about the reference to earmarks described in the DEIS. I have been asked to reply.

As Secretary Peters' comments suggest, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) has long opposed the congressional practice of earmarking. Most Federal-aid highway and transit funding is made available through our partnerships with State and local governments, which determine which projects are developed. However, we recognize that earmarking is a perennial practice that has continued for many years, despite the DOT's opposition through a succession of Administrations. Our State and local partners in the CRC project are free to pursue all available sources of funding, including earmarks, for this project.

The financial analysis in the DEIS, identified as "Capital Revenue Options," begins, "This section describes *potential* federal, state, and local revenues that *may* be used to fund CRC capital costs." (See page 4-8 of the DEIS, emphasis added.) The Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration will review the project's financial plan and will consider, among other things, whether it is based on an unrealistic over-reliance on earmarks.

The most important aspect of the DEIS is that it provides information on the CRC project for public and agency review and comment. I encourage you to submit any comments you may have on the project during the comment period, which ends July 1, 2008. All substantive comments received on the DEIS will be carefully considered as Federal and State officials move toward the FEIS.

Sincerely yours,

Fred Skaer, Director  
Office of Project Development  
and Environmental Review

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