


From: [Bill Scott](#) 
To: [Draft EIS Feedback;](#)
CC:
Subject: Comments on Draft EIS
Date: Sunday, June 29, 2008 10:07:29 PM
Attachments:

I strongly urge that the Task Force direct the preparation of a Supplemental Draft EIS to address many points that are inadequately dealt with.

My experience as the Director of the Oregon Economic and Community Development Department from 1993 to 2002 contributed to my strong conviction that it is imperative that Oregon and Washington take action to relieve the congestion on the I-5 Columbia River Crossing. Both freight and passenger travel on I-5 are critical to the economy of the Portland-Vancouver region.

However, I am appalled by the inadequacy of the alternatives considered in the Draft EIS. I fear that the only result of this flawed document and process will be more delay, congestion and frustration, because the only alternatives being considered are unaffordable, legally vulnerable and inadequate to solve the very real problems.

The real problem is that the only crossings available to serve local and regional trips are the interstate highways. Expanding the capacity of the interstate system to accommodate local trips will only induce more of the same. The Task Force has rightly called for a new transit/bike/pedestrian facility to accommodate many of the local trips, along with tolls that will inevitably depress trip demand.

Unfortunately, the alternatives being studied also dramatically increase interstate highway capacity at the same time, specifically to accommodate local/regional commute trips. If it were actually implemented, the effect of this muddled solution will likely be to offset the positive impacts of the demand management actions, resulting in no relief from congestion on Interstate 5 after many years of construction delays, following years of legal delays. In reality, the odds that we will ever actually fund this overgrown project are slim. I predict that the most likely outcome of the course you are on is that it will be aborted after years of delays and many more tens of millions of expenditures.

I urge you to do the right thing and pull the plug now.

Staff should be directed to analyze alternatives that (1) take into consideration the forward-thinking policies of Oregon and Washington concerning reduction in carbon emissions and vehicle miles travelled; (2) separate true intercity trips from local/regional commute trips; (3) use alternative modes and demand management, especially congestion pricing, to the fullest possible extent; (4) do not constrain the project to protect Pearson Air Park or the existing configuration of the downstream railroad bridge (which could be reconfigured at much less cost); (5) require much less local investment.

It appears that the alternatives analyzed are based on a paradigm of highway design that has outlived any logic it ever had. It is time for this region to show that we truly understand the realities of 21st century transportation and land use: (1) our first priority should be to protect our existing infrastructure and manage demand to make it last; (2) new capacity investments should reflect the realities of global warming and peak oil, with incremental trips being served by the very most sustainable modes; (3) low-density suburban development should not be encouraged or enabled by our transportation investments.

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