

From: KayceeWY@aol.com
To: [Columbia River Crossing](#);
CC:
Subject: I-5 Opposition Opinion
Date: Thursday, May 29, 2008 9:43:10 AM
Attachments:



To Whom It May Concern:

I take great offense that Carlotta Collette, Robert Leberly and Carl Hosticka signed a resolution to charge a toll on the current I-5 bridge between Vancouver and Portland simply because they believe a new bridge will create new congestion and promote sprawling development. And, mostly, they want to force the residents of Clark County to take mass transit. Why do they think they have the right to enforce taxes and a worse commute on other people? Have they asked the trucking industry what they think? It most certainly will raise the price of goods because it will take more fuel and time to get through this already horrible commuting corridor. Would they like this proposal? I bet not. But, I invite them to do their jobs and walk the talk. Find out what it's like to be a Clark County commuter.

I invite all three of them to get up at 5am, drive north, take the WA State Highway 14 exit, east, take exit 1 (Columbia Way), turn around and experience the Highway 14 interchange and I-5 commute for one month, every day, just like I do, every day. I also invite them to drop their cars in downtown Vancouver and commute to work for another month. Take the express bus into Portland and then take a bus to the Interstate light rail terminal and ride the "milk run" into Portland. It'll be a rude awakening to the realities faced by Clark County commuters and will give them a much better sense for why their proposal is nonsense and light rail to Clark County is nonsense.

I realize that these people think that by taxing rush hour commuters a premium to get to work or school is a good way to raise money for their coffers and to try to enforce the mass transit issue. I'm humored that they think most people have the option of not driving during rush hour and could commute at another time! Don't they have to be to work at a certain time? Those pesky bosses and school administrators expect most of us to report on time and actually a little early for a standard business day! And, I'm not sure many of us would give up an additional

hour or two of sleep to take mass transit. If you're just going to downtown Portland it isn't that far of a commute and taking mass transit would only add about a half hour to the commute. But, for many of us, we go beyond the downtown corridor and so our commutes would be a nightmare and take twice as long as sitting in our cars.

Believe me, it's a long, and unnecessarily miserable commute brought on and regulated by people who don't have the foggiest idea of what it's like. Why does Portland always have the final say in everything for Vancouver? They prohibit any commercial development of anything other than discount stores because we let them convince developers that only hillbillies live in Vancouver who don't have the taste or resources for the finer things in life - I would much rather pay tax on goods than support anything in Portland. And, for the record I don't think hillbillies just completed a \$50mm capital campaign for SW Washington Medical Center or raised \$4.2mm for a new breast care center at SW Washington Medical Center or raised over \$2mm for a new humane society. Come on! Wake up! Clark County residents are an economic force to be dealt with in this metro area - not a backwash, ugly step child to Portland! We're our own fabulous community!

The public transportation system doesn't work because it's not user friendly for working families that juggle multitudes of obligations and time lines for the members of their families every day. It's just too far between Vancouver and Portland for most people to spend an extra 2-3 hours commuting by mass transit and then try to get kids to their after school obligations, and do the routine daily chores of providing for a family. Amazingly enough, sitting in stalled traffic is still faster and more feasible. And, many of us don't want to live in a live/work/play community that Portland wants to inflict on everyone. We love living in Clark County and we love not living on top of each other!

Putting a fee on the bridge is only going to further congest the traffic while people stop and go through the toll booth and it's not going to really change that many commuting habits. There are large numbers of people who commute into Portland not only for work but also so their kids can go to school because there are no Catholic high schools in Vancouver, nor are there any non-denominational private school programs that run preschool through 12th grade. As a result, many families make the horrid drive into Portland every morning and return every night. We don't have much of a choice and we sure don't have a choice to not drive during rush hour. Also, we aren't going to get up two hours early to catch a slow, multi-change, bus or worse, unsafe light rail line, even if we have to pay toll fees and absurdly high toll fees because we have to drive during rush hour.

I constantly read about urban growth boundaries. If we're not going to enforce them, why do put them in place. And, if we have them aren't they supposed to ease urban sprawl? Come on! We have mechanisms in place, let use them, let's not punish the commuter and let's not use urban sprawl as a weak excuse!

Also, I think it's fiscally irresponsible to install light rail between Vancouver and Portland. First of all it's too expensive for the amount of ridership. Second, Portland has done a terrible job of ensuring the safety of it's light rail riders and they have built platforms in isolated and dangerous parts of the community between Vancouver and Portland. Third, the light rail system is built on two sets of tracks, one going one way, one going the other. As a result, we can't have express trains into downtown Portland or out to the surrounding areas because you can only run one train, each way, at a time. This makes the commute unbearably long and again, safety is a real issue. I would be irresponsible as a mother to let my kids ride the light rail.

Additionally, light rail is permanent and comes at a very high expense, if the population center changes, we're stuck with the existing light rail that once again, no one will ride because it doesn't take them to where they need to go. It's easy to change a bus route but pretty impossible to change light rail lines as the population centers change. If we buy more buses and dedicate those buses to express trips to the population centers in the metro area, we'll have more ridership and buses are a lot less expensive than light rail.

So, I urge you to not tax us to cross an already crowded and dilapidated bridge. I don't mind paying a reasonable toll of a couple dollars per crossing a new bridge, but I mind being taxed at a higher rate because I don't have the choice to not commute during rush hour and I'm not getting up before dawn to get my kids to school. This is nuts and it's unfair to the residents of Clark County. I'm tired of being dictated to by Portlanders who don't know anything at all about Clark County or it's transportation needs or concerns.

Sincerely,

Kaycee Wiita
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