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JUN 27 2008

ODOT
HEADQUARTERS**Memorandum**

Date: June 26, 2008

To: John McAvoy, PE, Major Projects Manager, FHA
Linda Gehrke, Deputy Regional Administrator, FTA
Paula Hammond, Transportation Secretary, WSDOT
Don Wagner, SW Washington Region Director, WSDOT
Matthew Garrett, Director, ODOT

From: Larry Paulson, Executive Director, the Port of Vancouver USA

Re: Comment submission to the Columbia River Crossing Draft
Environmental Impact Statement

Encl: Port of Vancouver Board of Commissioners Resolution 03-2008,
Resolution 07-2008

Hr. w/ attachments electronically
emailed to Carley Francis @
CRC office

cc: Patrick Cooney
Doug Tindall
General Files

Orig. Hr. w/ attachments
also forwarded to
Carley Francis by
reg. mail.

Re

The Port of Vancouver USA submits this memo and the enclosed Board of Commissioners resolutions into the public comment record for the Columbia River Crossing (CRC) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).

The Port of Vancouver Commission supports a replacement Interstate 5 bridge, and supports the construction of Light Rail Transit. The I-5 Columbia River Crossing is vital to the movement of freight from the Port of Vancouver to the nation's highway network, and to the T-5 Trade Corridor connecting Canada, the United States and Mexico. The removal of the Columbia Crossing bottleneck on the west coast surface freight system is critical, as are improvements to navigational challenges the existing bridges present to the 465-mile Columbia/Snake river commerce system.

In addition to the enclosed resolutions, port staff submits the following comments:

The Port of Vancouver handles a variety of cargo, including oversized cargo such as wind energy projects. Our freight corridors include Fourth Plain Boulevard and Mill Plain Boulevard. These routes both lie within the CRC BIA. The port supports an LRT alignment that serves downtown Vancouver, ending at Clark College. This Light Rail Transit (LRT) alignment intersects Mill Plain Boulevard at up to two intersections between the port and I-5.

In a contracted study conducted this Spring on behalf of the port, the construction of an LRT crossing of Mill Plain, in addition to increased traffic in downtown Vancouver, will cause significant capacity and velocity constraints on Mill Plain. To minimize impact at key freight intersections, we recommend LRT power lines meet all Federal highway

height clearance standards. This will allow the passage of our existing and future oversized cargos.

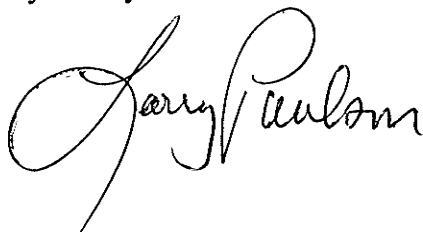
The port's transportation study also indicates the likelihood of Fourth Plain Boulevard becoming essential to serving the port's freight movement due to significant capacity constraints projected for Mill Plain Boulevard. The Fourth Plain Boulevard/I-5 Interchange must accommodate increasing volumes and variety, of freight.

Traffic projections for full build out of the port include a doubling of truck volumes, from 200,000 to more than 400,000 annually, within the next 20 years. These volumes include oversized cargos. Due to truck volume increases, and the potential construction of a park and ride structure in close proximity to Fourth Plain and I-5, the port requires assurances that the Fourth Plain interchange configuration will accommodate capacity and functionality requirements to freight passage.

In regards to the recommendations of the Columbia River Crossing Task Force, on which the Port of Vancouver held one seat, we submit the following clarifications to items on the Task Force supplemental positions:

1. The Port of Vancouver supports three through lanes and three auxiliary lanes in each direction, across the new bridges. We believe that three lanes will significantly improve flow across the bridge, and effectively address congestion and safety issues associated with nearly 70 percent of traffic entering, exiting or both, within the Bridge Influence Area (BIA). This will greatly improve travel time and efficiency for freight movement.
2. The port supports sustainable practices in the design, construction and operation of the new crossings, as well as meeting state emission reduction goals as recommended by the Washington Climate Action Team.
3. We support tolls as a funding source for the project, given the understanding that they must be imposed legally, on a new structure, as per Washington State tolling regulations.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Gary Paulson". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the text "Thank you for your consideration of these comments."

RESOLUTION NO. 07-2008**A RESOLUTION OF THE PORT OF VANCOUVER USA BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO REPRESENT THE COMMISSION'S POSITION REGARDING HIGH CAPACITY TRANSIT TO THE COLUMBIA RIVER CROSSING TASK FORCE FINAL VOTE ON JUNE 24, 2008.**

WHEREAS, the Port of Vancouver USA Board of Commissioners on January 22, 2008 elected to approve Resolution 03-2008, regarding the Columbia River Crossing Project (CRC), supporting a replacement bridge, and improvements to the Mill Plain and Fourth Plain boulevard interchanges;

WHEREAS, the Port of Vancouver USA Board of Commissioners further elected to table consideration of a transit alternative to a later date;

WHEREAS, the Columbia River Crossing Project federal funding and approval is dependant on the inclusion of High Capacity Transit as an element of the project;

WHEREAS, Light Rail Transit will offer the most significant congestion relief of potential transit modes on the highway system, providing more capacity for freight transportation;

WHEREAS, Light Rail Transit will provide Port of Vancouver USA tenants, customers and employees with an alternate transportation mode choice;

WHEREAS, construction of Light Rail Transit will likely be funded by the Federal Transit Administration;

WHEREAS, Light Rail Transit annual operational costs are significantly lower than Bus Rapid Transit;

WHEREAS, the Port of Vancouver USA supports a Light Rail Transit alignment that minimizes impacts to the port's freight corridors on Mill Plain and Fourth Plain boulevards and interchanges;

WHEREAS, on June 24 2008, the Columbia River Crossing Task Force, of which the Port of Vancouver is a member, will hold their final meeting to conduct a vote on the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), within the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) process;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Port of Vancouver USA Board of Commissioners recommends the following policy guidance to its CRC Task Force representative as:

HIGH CAPACITY TRANSIT MODE: Light Rail Transit to be constructed between the Multnomah County Expo Center to a terminus at Clark College.

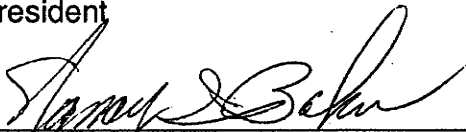
FREIGHT MOBILITY: Encourage an alignment that minimizes impacts to the port's key freight corridors, including Mill Plain Boulevard, and Fourth Plain Boulevard, and corresponding interchanges with Interstate 5.

ADOPTED by the Port of Vancouver Board of Commissioners on the 24th day of June, 2008 and signed in authentication of its adoption.

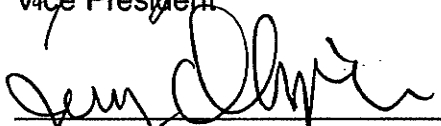
**PORT OF VANCOUVER, U.S.A.
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**



President



Vice President



Secretary

RESOLUTION NO. 03-2008**A RESOLUTION OF THE PORT OF VANCOUVER BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO REPRESENT THE COMMISSION'S POSITION REGARDING THE COLUMBIA RIVER CROSSING LOCALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE**

WHEREAS, the Port of Vancouver USA supports the Columbia River Crossing Project (CRC), as it has a vested interest in ensuring adequate reliability and capacity for freight at, and in the vicinity of the Interstate 5 (I-5) crossing;

WHEREAS, this two-bridge crossing, which served 30,000 vehicles per day in the 1960's, now carries more than 125,000 automobiles, buses and trucks each weekday, and is the only remaining lift span bridge on the Interstate system;

WHEREAS, replacing the existing I-5 bridges enables the efficient flow of freight and people by addressing congestion, capacity and safety compromises that exist due to the age and functionality of the current structures;

WHEREAS, the current structures cause significant safety hazards, including short merge lanes, lack of safety shoulders, frequent bridge lifts and substantial navigation challenges for river traffic;

WHEREAS, the downstream alignment of a replacement bridge will avoid a prolonged construction period with significant capacity impacts associated with an upstream alignment, and avoid impacts to the Vancouver Historic Reserve;

WHEREAS, the port supports multiple transportation options for port and tenant employees, allowing for better transit access to port property, and to the businesses that are located here;

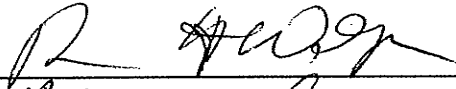
WHEREAS, the Mill Plain and Fourth Plain Boulevard interchanges at I-5 are essential to the efficient flow of freight in our region. Improvements will allow for expected growth from downtown development, densification within West Vancouver, port development and West Vancouver industrial business development;

WHEREAS, in early 2008, the CRC Task Force, of which the Port of Vancouver is a member, will provide their feedback to the CRC project staff on their preferred alternative, which will be included in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) study process, as required by the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA);

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that 1) the Port of Vancouver USA Board of Commissioners supports replacing the existing I-5 bridges to improve efficient flow of surface and maritime freight; and 2) the Port of Vancouver Board of Commissioners supports improvements to the Mill Plain and Fourth Plain boulevard interchanges at I-5, to ensure efficient freight access to and from the interstate system.

ADOPTED by the Port of Vancouver Board of Commissioners on the 22nd day of January, 2008 and signed in authentication of its adoption.

**PORT OF VANCOUVER, U.S.A.
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**



President



Vice President



Secretary