



From: [Steve Sekel](#)
To: [Columbia River Crossing](#)
CC:
Subject: Comments on project funding
Date: Thursday, June 26, 2008 1:26:20 PM
Attachments:

Dear Columbia River Crossing Task Force representative,

I would like to make two comments concerning the proposed funding of the project:

P-0220-001 First on tolling, I have no problem with a “tax” added to pay for a service. I have a big problem with a tax placed on a service that is actually a revenue generator for a totally non-related service. I recently worked for a company headquartered outside of New York City. All of the bridges which cross the Hudson river have tolls, stated to pay for “the maintenance of the bridge”. However, with the high toll rate (\$6) and heavy traffic, some bridges are generating in excess of one million dollars in toll revenue per day! Clearly a vast majority of this revenue is actually being funneled into areas not related to bridge maintenance. I would like to see both the State of Oregon and the State of Washington draft laws which state that the toll revenue be used exclusively for repayment of any construction bonds and the ongoing maintenance of the bridge and feeder roadways. Audits at the end of the year should be used to adjust toll rates as needed to meet this criteria.

P-0220-002 Second – The State of Oregon applies state income tax to Washington residents who work in Oregon. The tax rate is the full rate which Oregon residents pay, despite the fact that Washington residents who work in Oregon utilize only a fraction of the services which Oregon residents do. This has never been fair taxation. Since many of these Washington state residents commute to work over the I-5 bridge, there is an opportunity for some equalization. I believe that a portion of the Oregon state income tax paid by Washington residents who are employed in the Oregon Tri-county area (area serviced by Metro), be diverted from the Oregon general fund, and applied directly to the funding of the new bridge, and its ongoing maintenance.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely

P-0220-001

The authority to toll the I-5 crossing is set by federal and state laws. Federal statutes permit a toll-free bridge on an interstate highway to be converted to a tolled facility following the reconstruction or replacement of the bridge, and the CRC project would meet these conditions. Prior to tolling I-5, Washington and Oregon Departments of Transportation (WSDOT and ODOT) would have to enter into a toll agreement with the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT). State legislation from 2008 in Washington permits WSDOT to toll I-5 provided that the tolling of the facility is first authorized by the Washington legislature. Once authorized by the legislature, the Washington Transportation Commission has the authority to set the toll rates. In Oregon, the Oregon Transportation Commission has the authority to toll a facility and to set the toll rates. It is anticipated that prior to tolling I-5, ODOT and WSDOT would enter into a bi-state tolling agreement to establish a cooperative process for imposing tolls, set toll rates, and guide the use of toll revenues.

P-0220-002

Please refer to Chapter 4 of the FEIS for a description of the current plans for funding construction and operation of the LPA. This discussion provides an updated assessment of likely funding sources for this project, though it is not common practice to receive funding commitments prior to completion of the alternative selection process. As described in the FEIS, project funding is expected to come from a variety of local, state, and federal sources, with federal funding and tolls providing substantial revenue for the construction. As Oregon and Washington businesses and residents will benefit from the project’s multi-modal improvements, both states have been identified as contributors to the project. As jurisdictions on both sides of the river seek to encourage non-auto travel, tolls are not anticipated for bikes, pedestrians, and transit users. Lastly, CRC assumes funds allocated to other projects and purposes would remain dedicated to those projects and purposes.

Steve Sekel,
Camas, WA