

June 18, 2008

Columbia River Crossing
c/o Heather Gunderson, Environmental Manager
700 Washington Street, Suite 300
Vancouver, WA 98660



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Columbia River Crossing

Subject: Marine Drive Interchange/Portland Expo Center
Ref: DEIS - Ch.2, Pg.26

Dear Ms. Gunderson, CRC project staff and CRC Task Force Members:

B-002-001

As the governing board of the Northwest Agricultural Show, we would like to address the proposed options being considered for the Marine Drive Interchange and the possible impact to the Portland Expo Center.

The Northwest Ag Show is preparing for its 40th Anniversary show in 2009; for 32 of those years, we have been at the Portland Expo Center. Over the course of those years, we have been approached by several other venues and organizations wanting to move our show to a location outside of Portland. Each time the option was presented, it was inevitably discarded due mainly to the size of our show and the time of year it is held. The Expo Center is, quite simply, the only venue large enough for our entire show to be held inside; a necessity when held in January. We represent over 200 agricultural vendors who consider this area to be an annual stop on their trade show circuit. And, because of the central location, we draw attendees from all along the I-5 corridor; as far north as Canada and south into California. Because we have thousands of exhibitors and attendees traveling to our show, we work with several hotels and restaurants in the Expo Center's immediate area to accommodate them.

B-002-002

Upon reviewing the available material detailing the proposed changes to the Marine Drive Interchange, we strongly oppose both the Diagonal & Southern Alignment options. The apparent change to traffic patterns and access to the site would have a direct effect on our attendance numbers. Our main difficulty in getting our agricultural attendees to the show is their resistance to driving through the metropolitan area. Any additional restriction and/or complication of the area will make it that much harder for our show to draw in attendees. Also, the possible loss of building space and parking lot area would severely hinder our show's ability to be competitive with other trade shows. As stated earlier in this letter, we are not able to move our show, in its entirety, to another venue; loss of building space may cause us to restrict our show size, making us, and the Metro area, a less viable stop on the agricultural trade show circuit. Conversely, the Standard/Current option for the interchange would make this new construction a seamless and positive addition to the Expo Center and the surrounding area. We support the Standard/Current option and urge you to consider the many shows/events that bring economic stimulus to the Expo Center and its surrounding areas each year.

Sincerely,

Polly Owen, Jeff Rumpca, Dan Keeley, Tim Newkirk, Aimee McAuliffe, Dan Wells, Dan Klupenger, Mary Louise VanNatta, Mickey Hatley, Mark Wilmes, Preston Henry
The Northwest Horticultural Congress

James Heater
Show Manager

Amy Patrick
Assistant Show Manager



Cc: Chris Bailey, Director - Portland Expo Center

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B-002-001

Thank you for taking the time to submit your comments on the I-5 CRC DEIS.

B-002-002

Following the publication of the DEIS in May 2008, and the selection of the LPA in July 2008, the CRC project team established a Stakeholder Group to provide feedback on the function and design of the Marine Drive interchange. This advisory group was comprised of a wide range of stakeholders with strong interests in the final design of this interchange including Metro; TriMet; the Oregon Department of Transportation; the City of Portland; the Port of Portland; trucking and distributions companies; the Audubon Society; nearby property owners or operators, such as Diversified Marine and the Metropolitan Exposition Recreation Commission; as well as community members from the surrounding Bridgeton, Kenton, and East Columbia Neighborhoods.

As discussed in Chapter 2 (Section 2.7) of the FEIS, working with this advisory group, the CRC project team conducted studies that analyzed the traffic operations, property impacts, and potential environmental effects for a range of potential interchange designs. The Marine Drive interchange design included in the LPA that is analyzed in the FEIS was developed with this stakeholder advisory group to balance many competing interests, including freight mobility, property impacts to nearby properties, and environmental impacts. More detailed information regarding this process and its outcome is available in the Marine Drive Interchange Alignment Recommendation Process: Final Summary Report and Stakeholder Recommendation, available online in the project's electronic library at www.columbiarivercrossing.org or by contacting the project office.