

**From:** [Monica Isbell](#)  
**To:** [Draft EIS Feedback](#);  
**CC:**  
**Subject:** comments on draft eis  
**Date:** Monday, June 02, 2008 11:42:31 AM  
**Attachments:** [crc draft eis comment\\_starboard alliance.doc](#)

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Please find attached my comments in support of the CRC.  
Best regards,  
Monica Isbell

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2 June 2008

Columbia River Crossing Staff

Re: Comments on the Draft EIS

To Whom It May Concern,

**B-024-001**

I began my career in international trade and logistics in 1980 and have worked for a variety of logistics service providers, importers and exporters including Columbia Sportswear. For the past six years, I've owned a supply chain consulting practice called Starboard Alliance Company LLC. My clients consist of shippers, logistics service providers, ports and government agencies. I understand the role that the global transportation system plays in supply chains and how a weak link negatively affects the health and performance of an otherwise efficient transportation system and adversely impacts the bottom line of U.S. companies. Serving on the Columbia River Crossing (CRC) task force during the past three years has given me first-hand knowledge of the process of scrutinizing possible options to address the many issues present in the existing I-5 bridge.

The pace of international trade has accelerated over the past two decades and American companies in large numbers have shifted production to foreign suppliers, particularly in China. This is not a passing fad, but rather a business process that has become entrenched and normalized. U.S. consumers demand an ever-changing and diverse array of products at low prices, and have made shopping at discount chains like Wal-Mart and Target routine. This means that America's appetite for imports will continue to grow.

The dollar's weakness has also facilitated a surge in U.S. exports during the past year and forecasters expect this increase in exports will continue into the foreseeable future. This has been good news for Oregon and Washington exporters, particularly in the agriculture sector.

Drilling down, these trends equate to more freight movement through U.S. port gateways and on American highways and the rail system. Though OR and WA have relatively small population bases, more products will naturally flow through our two states, contributing to economic health, but putting more pressure on the already capacity-strained transportation system.

Oregonians and Washingtonians pride themselves on a having a good quality of life. But let me remind you that livability starts with having a decent job. Because they facilitate job retention and development, trade and freight movement should be considered positive things for our region.

The CRC must not be viewed as a discrete element – a bridge. It is a critical link in a transportation network that connects our local area with the region, state, and nation from many perspectives, least of which is economically. A weak link affects the health and performance of the whole transportation system. A new, modern, high capacity, safe and seismically-sound bridge without a lift span, with light rail, and with better designed on and off ramps will provide better connectivity to other critical transportation network arteries, improve reliability, and ensure that this five mile bridge influence area is a strong link and not one that serves to regularly seize up the system.

**B-024-002**



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## B-024-001

The ability to move freight efficiently in the Vancouver/Portland region is critical to the overall health of our economy. As such, the CRC project is designed to improve freight mobility on I-5, as well as make it safer and easier for trucks to get on and off I-5 to reach businesses and Port facilities. The Freight Working Group (FWG), comprised of representatives of the Vancouver-Portland metropolitan area's freight industry, met 22 times throughout the DEIS and FEIS development process to advise and inform the Columbia River Crossing project team about freight issues. The group provided insight, observation, and recommendation about the needs for truck access and mobility within the corridor; characterized the horizontal and vertical clearances, acceleration/deceleration, and stopping performance needs of trucks that must be accommodated; and provided meaningful comments on the effect of geometric, regulatory, and capacity changes on truck movements in the corridor. See Chapter 3 (Section 3.1) of the FEIS for detailed discussion of how the project increases freight mobility and access along I-5 and in the region.

## B-024-002

Preferences for specific alternatives or options, as expressed in comments received before and after the issuance of the DEIS, were shared with local sponsor agencies to inform decision making. Following the close of the 60-day DEIS public comment period in July 2008, the CRC project's six local sponsor agencies selected a replacement I-5 bridge with light rail to Clark College as the project's Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA). These sponsor agencies, which include the Portland City Council, Vancouver City Council, TriMet Board, C-TRAN Board, Metro Council, RTC Board, considered the DEIS analysis, public comment, and a recommendation from the CRC Task Force when voting on the LPA.

With the LPA, new bridges will replace the existing Interstate Bridges to

**B-024-003**

In September 2007, the U.S. Department of Transportation designated I-5 as one of six Corridors of the Future, recognizing its critical importance in the transportation network and to the U.S. economy. The goal of this program is "to develop innovative national and regional approaches to reduce congestion and improve the efficiency of freight delivery." The federal government initially allocated in excess of \$66,000,000 to support this important initiative. The CRC is viewed by the freight industry as the worst bottleneck on the entire I-5 route from Canada to Mexico and is the only drawbridge on a major interstate route. It is imperative that this bottleneck be addressed soon and in the most effective manner, not only for the sake of the region, but the entire West Coast.

**B-024-004**

Let me remind you that the cost of this project will not be borne alone by the region. Federal funds should be available for both the infrastructure and mass transit components if the CRC Project meets the deadline to be considered for federal appropriations. The states of Oregon and Washington will contribute their fare share. And drivers will be expected to pay for the use of the new facility through tolling, which is common in many parts of the U.S. and around the world.

**B-024-005**

The CRC Project was not designed to benefit one constituency at the expense of others. The task force, which was comprised on purpose of a wide variety of people and interests, has been very careful to ensure that all voices have been heard through this lengthy public process. I firmly believe this project has the ability to positively impact all stakeholders that use the river crossing – commuters, discretionary travelers, shippers, freight handling companies, firms that provide services to homes and businesses, emergency vehicles, the maritime industry, bicyclists, pedestrians and, yes, even neighborhoods.

**B-024-006**

The demand management programs that will be established as part of the CRC Project will reduce demand and discretionary trips and increase the use of car pooling, mass transit systems and bicycles, and get more people out walking, thereby freeing up room to carry the forecasted increase in freight that can only move in trucks.

**B-024-007**

I don't disagree that a negative consequence of having more vehicles on our roads is air pollution. But experts posit that one way to keep air pollution at bay is to have a network that enables vehicles to move at normal speeds rather than sit idling in traffic. The CRC will do just that.

**B-024-008**

Because we operate in a global marketplace, moving forward with the CRC project will enable Oregon and Washington companies to maintain global competitiveness rather than fall behind. This translates into a healthy economy and jobs for citizens. Failing to act will have severe economic costs and negative consequences as represented in the "Cost of Congestion Study" done at the end of 2005. I've dedicated a great deal of time by serving on the CRC task force because I believe a new river crossing is absolutely essential to the vitality of this region's economy and is the right thing to do.

Respectfully,  
Starboard Alliance Company LLC

Monica Isbell  
Owner/Manager



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carry I-5 traffic, light rail, pedestrians and bicyclists across the Columbia River. Light rail will extend from the Expo Center MAX Station in Portland to a station and park and ride at Clark College in Vancouver. Pedestrians and bicyclists would travel along a wider and safer path than exists today.

For a more detailed description of highway, transit, and bicycle and pedestrian improvements associated with the LPA, see Chapter 2 of the FEIS.

**B-024-003**

Thank you for taking the time to submit your comments on the I-5 CRC DEIS. We agree that freight mobility is an critical issue for the Portland/Vancouver area; and that this project is critical to future economic development.

**B-024-004**

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.

**B-024-005**

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

**B-024-006**

Many well coordinated TDM/TSM programs are already in place in the Portland-Vancouver Metropolitan region and supported by agencies and adopted plans. In most cases, the impetus for the programs is from state-mandated programs: Oregon's Employee Commute Options rule and Washington's Commute Trip Reduction law.

The physical and operational elements of the CRC project provide the greatest TDM opportunities by promoting other modes to fulfill more of the travel needs in the project corridor. These include: major new light rail line in exclusive right-of-way, as well as express bus and feeder routes; modern bicycle and pedestrian facilities that accommodate more bicyclists and pedestrians, and improve connectivity, safety, and travel time; park and ride lots and garages; and a variable toll on the highway crossing.

In addition to these fundamental elements of the project, facilities and equipment would be implemented that could help existing or expanded TSM programs maximize capacity and efficiency of the system. These include: replacement or expanded variable message signs or other traveler information systems in the CRC project area; expanded incident response capabilities; queue jumps or bypass lanes for transit vehicles and other designated vehicles where multi-lane approaches are provided at ramp signals for entrance ramps; and expanded traveler information systems with additional traffic monitoring equipment and cameras.

The CRC project has crafted a multi-pronged TDM program to address capacity demands during construction of the project. The program promotes alternate modes of transportation for those crossing the bridge

and includes increased carpool, vanpool and transit options and promotion of pedestrian and bicycle trips.

**B-024-007**

The air quality evaluation presented in the DEIS assessed how emissions would be expected to change by 2030 and how the project would affect emissions of pollutants regulated by state and federal standards as well as vehicle emissions that are not regulated. Oregon and Washington, as well as the federal government, have established ambient air quality standards for criteria pollutants. These standards are based on human health risks. The DEIS evaluation included an analysis demonstrating that the CRC project would allow the region to retain conformity with state and federal air quality standards for relevant criteria pollutants. See the Air Quality Technical Report for a detailed explanation of the state and federal regulations concerning air quality and the evaluation of how the project complies with relevant air quality regulations. See Section 3.10 of the FEIS for an updated explanation of the pollutants regulated by state and federal law.

The DEIS also evaluated how the project alternatives would affect emissions of mobile source air toxins (MSATs) from I-5 traffic. MSAT emissions from vehicles are not currently regulated. The evaluation in the DEIS found "that future (no-build or build) emissions of all pollutants would be substantially lower than existing emissions for the region and the subareas" (page 3-277). These reductions in emissions are largely the result of on-going reductions in vehicle emissions that will occur with or without the project, and are based on standard assumptions regarding future vehicles and fuel. The anticipated vehicle emission reductions are based largely on regulation-driven improvements in fleet fuel efficiency standards and cleaner gasoline and diesel fuels. Any extraordinary improvements in fleet fuel efficiency or fuels would result in even greater emission reductions.

Projected reductions in vehicle fleet emissions would result in a 25% to 90% reduction in I-5 related criteria pollutant emissions over existing conditions, even with the anticipated growth in population, employment and VMT. In addition, the build alternatives would provide small further reductions in vehicle emissions at the regional level and for most pollutants in each of the subareas along I-5. CO and NOx emissions would be slightly higher with the project than with No-Build (but still lower than existing conditions) in the I-5 subarea between the SR 14 and SR 500 interchanges, as discussed in DEIS Chapter 3 (Section 3.10) and FEIS Chapter 3 (Section 3.10). The updated analysis conducted for the FEIS resulted in very similar findings to those in the DEIS.

**B-024-008**

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