

STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
49th DISTRICT  
**JIM MOELLER**  
DEPUTY SPEAKER PRO TEM

State of  
Washington  
House of  
Representatives



JOINT COMMITTEE ON  
VETERANS MILITARY AFFAIRS  
CO-CHAIR  
HEALTH CARE & WELLNESS  
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JUDICIARY  
RULES

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Columbia River Crossing Task Force  
700 Washington Street, Suite 300,  
Vancouver Washington 98660

Dear Sir/Madame:

**S-003-001** For the next several months you will be making decisions that will greatly affect the quality of life in Southwest Washington as well as our neighbors across the Columbia River. As you know, the phenomenal growth in our area and the mass numbers of citizens crossing the Columbia River each day have brought the issue of the aging I-5 Bridge to a critical point.

The decision as to what is the best alternative for replacing this bridge is one that will impact the area for many generations. The high cost of fuel, traffic congestion, environmental concerns, a growing population and the need for transportation alternatives must drive the final solution. The ideal bridge configuration should include the following:

- Replace the existing I-5 Bridge with a new crossing downstream west of the current alignment and remove the existing bridge. The design would require a "Staked Transit/Highway Bridge" design that would require three new bridges rather than the three needed in a standard replacement crossing design. This STHB design would include transit beneath the highway deck of the I-5 southbound bridge and would suspend the bicycle and pedestrian path under the eastern edge of the northbound I-5 Bridge.
- The new crossing design should incorporate one of the bridges *for light rail instead of for bus transit*, as well as dedicated transit lanes for bicyclist and pedestrians.

The opportunity exists for Southwest Washington to connect to an already established and operating high capacity transit (light rail) in Oregon. Additionally, there is a real possibility that the initial cost of incorporating the line into the replacement bridge on I-5 will be financed with federal funds. Regardless of who pays, a dedicated light rail line across the replacement bridge that connects Vancouver to the greater Portland area is a better long term option for the future.

We are not building a bridge for ourselves but ultimately for future generations. Investing in a hundred year bridge *without* including light rail as it is being expanded throughout the economic powerhouse to the South is shortsighted and will ultimately regulate Vancouver's economic growth.

Thank you for your efforts and please contact my office with any questions or comments.

Sincerely

Representative Jim Moeller, 49<sup>th</sup> District



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## S-003-001

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 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.