



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

RECEIVED

JUN 27 2008

ODOT
HEADQUARTERS

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.

Key

L-013-001

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:

L-013-002

The Port of Vancouver handles a variety of cargo, including outsized 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

L-013-001

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.

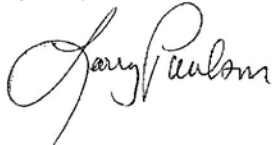
For a more detailed description of highway, transit, and bicycle and pedestrian improvements associated with the LPA, see Chapter 2 of the FEIS.

L-013-002

Thank you for your comment. The traffic and design teams have worked to address the complex situation at Mill Plain Boulevard. Mill Plain Boulevard needs to serve pedestrians and help reconnect the downtown and uptown business districts. At the same time, freight mobility and light rail transit operations need to be accommodated and improved. Many design refinements have been made with freight movements in mind. The overhead catenary system will be high enough to accommodate extra large loads. The ramp entrances at the Mill Plain Boulevard

- L-013-002** | height clearance standards. This will allow the passage of our existing and future oversized cargos.
- L-013-003** | 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 cargoes. 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.
- L-013-004** | 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:
- L-013-005** | 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.
- L-013-006** | 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.
- L-013-007** | 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.



Interchange have also been modified to improve the turning movements for long trucks.

L-013-003

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.

L-013-004

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

L-013-005

Following the selection of the LPA in July of 2008, the CRC Project Sponsors Council (PSC) was developed to provide recommendations to the project on a variety of issues, including the number of add/drop lanes over the river crossing. Over the course of several months, PSC was provided with operational characteristics and potential environmental

L-013-008

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:

Resolution No. 07-2008
June 24, 2008

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impacts of 8-, 10-, and 12-lane options. These technical evaluation criteria included, but were not limited to, traffic safety, congestion, traffic diversion onto local streets and I-205, regional vehicle miles travelled, transit ridership, regional economic impact, effects to neighborhoods, and protected species and habitats. In addition to the technical information, PSC received input from CRC advisory groups and reviewed public comment submitted to the project and obtained during two public Q&A sessions in January 2009 regarding the number of lanes decision, as well as hearings conducted by Portland City Council and by Metro Council. In August 2010, the PSC voted unanimously to recommend that the replacement bridges be constructed with 10 lanes and full shoulders. For more information regarding the number of lanes decision making process, see Chapter 2 (Section 2.7) of the FEIS.

The proposed new lanes are add/drop lanes (i.e., lanes that connect two or more interchanges), which are used to alleviate safety issues associated with the closely spaced interchanges in the project area, and accommodate the 68 to 75% of traffic that enters and/or exits I-5 within two miles of the Columbia River.

L-013-006

Please see updated climate change analysis in Chapter 3 (Section 3.19) of the FEIS.

L-013-007

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). The LPA design has been refined, and includes a tolling system with congestion/variable pricing.

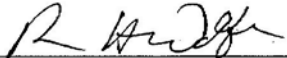
L-013-008

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.

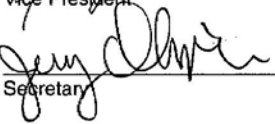
PORT OF VANCOUVER, U.S.A.
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



President



Vice President



Secretary

L-013-008

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

L-013-008

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;

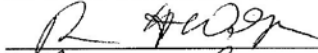
WHEREAS, in early 2008, the CRC Task Force, of which the Port of Vancouver is a member, will provide their feedback to the CRC project staff on their preferred alternative, which will be included in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) study process, as required by the National Environmental Protection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

L-013-008


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