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## Columbia River CROSSING

# Project update

March 18, 2013

## Oregon Legislature, governor approve CRC funding

Oregon Governor Kitzhaber has signed into law a bill that provides \$450 million in funding for the Columbia River Crossing project.

After more than a decade of planning, the Oregon state legislature moved quickly this session to deliver a CRC funding bill to the governor for review and approval.



Governor Kitzhaber noted: *"This is an important step forward for our state and the Pacific Northwest economy. By investing in a more efficient and effective transportation system for Oregon, we are providing a safer and less congested trip for freight and commuters."*

House Bill 2800 was shaped by a joint committee in early February. The legislation includes several "triggers" or safeguards that place conditions on the release of Oregon state funding for the project. These triggers include that Washington must commit its state funding contribution; the Oregon State Treasurer will review traffic and revenue projections produced through the Investment Grade Analysis and the project's finance plan; the project receive a general bridge permit from the U.S. Coast Guard; and the Federal Transit Administration submits a New Starts grant for \$850 million for congressional review.



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## I-5 and the Pacific Northwest Economy

The I-5 Bridge Replacement Project will make improvements to the Interstate 5 corridor which serves as the primary trade route from Mexico to Canada. This five-mile area provides the main access to the Port of Portland, Port of Vancouver, downtown Vancouver and regionally significant industrial areas such as the Columbia Corridor. The Marine Drive interchange, which serves the Port of Portland's marine terminals, is the most used freight interchange in the Oregon.

Text for the enrolled bill can be found on the Oregon Legislature [website](#). Watch the bill signing [ceremony](#).

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### General Bridge Permit Application process moves forward

The Columbia River Crossing project has received the US Coast Guard's [preliminary completeness review](#) of the bridge permit application submitted Jan. 30, 2013, for the Interstate 5 replacement bridge across the Columbia River. The Coast Guard finds "much of the application sufficient" and has identified "certain areas where more information is required" before commencing "the public notice and comment process."

The Coast Guard, the CRC project, and potentially impacted river users seek the most complete and data driven analysis as possible, so the Coast Guard can issue an informed decision by Sept. 30, 2013. The Coast Guard has requested information about a section of the river navigation channel, the type and schedule for reaching mitigation agreements with the impacted businesses, the source data for the economic analysis, and technical and administrative modifications to the application.

More information available [online](#).

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### Federal judge dismisses legal actions by Columbia River fabricators

Federal judge Marco Hernandez issued an order March 13, 2013, dismissing Thompson Metal Fab, Inc.'s National Environmental Policy Act lawsuit and denying the motion of Greenberry Industrial, Inc. to intervene in lawsuits brought by environmental and community advocacy groups challenging the CRC. The rulings represent a step forward in the federal and state agencies' coordinated defense of the project from legal challenges under NEPA.

More information available [online](#).

### Why trade matters to the regional economy:

- Washington is the fifth largest exporter in the U.S.; two-in-five jobs in Washington are trade-related; [In Clark County more than one-in-two jobs](#) (~51 percent) are trade related..
- Oregon is ranked eighth in the nation in trade per capita by export value. Oregon has the fifth largest export-supported job base in the U.S.; one in five Oregon jobs are trade-related.
- The Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro export value topped \$21.3 billion in 2010—nearly 20 percent of the Metro GDP ([Brookings Institute](#))

More information available [online](#).

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### Independent toll analysis yields preliminary toll fund capacity estimate for I-5 bridge

As part of the ongoing investment grade traffic and toll revenue study, a preliminary toll funding capacity analysis was delivered to the Oregon and Washington state legislatures in late February. The analysis validated the conservative range of tolling funds, \$900 million - \$1.3 billion, that were identified in the final Environmental Impact Statement. The updated range of \$1.07 - \$1.75 billion indicates additional funding could be available; the report does not change the financial plan. The estimate range will be refined over the course of the investment grade analysis process.

This updated toll capacity range takes into account a range of current population and employment forecasts, is based on updated models calibrated by a 2011 travel behavior study and travel cost factors, and assumes current financing structures and

assumptions which have been updated since a 2009-10 tolling study. Future analyses are anticipated in summer and fall 2013.

The preliminary toll funds estimate report is available [online](#).

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