



**Washington State
Department of Transportation**
Lynn Peterson
Secretary of Transportation



**Oregon Department
of Transportation**
Matthew L. Garrett
Director

April 18, 2013

Rear Admiral Keith A. Taylor
U.S. Coast Guard District 13
915 Second Ave., Room 3590
Seattle, WA, 98174

Subject: Columbia River Crossing General Bridge Permit Application Follow Up

Dear Rear Admiral Taylor:

Thank you for your continued coordination with the states of Washington and Oregon on the USCG review of the application for a General Bridge Permit for the I-5 bridge replacement. Both states are committed to providing you with the analysis, study and data necessary to facilitate the permit review and approval process. We also recognize the iterative nature of this process and will continue to work with your staff as additional questions arise so all parties can meet the dates agreed to on the "We Can't Wait" federal dashboard initiative.

The proposed vertical clearance of 116' above O' Columbia River Datum for the new I-5 replacement bridge, as embodied in the January 30, 2013 application materials, provides for the best balance between the highway needs and safety, landside impacts, potential encroachment to nearby airspace, and of course, users of the Columbia River. That clearance will provide safer passage under the bridge for over 99 percent of the vessels on the river by allowing for greater vertical height along the north shore of the river throughout the majority of each day than exists today, and will provide for greater horizontal clearance between piers requiring less maneuvering for vessels.

In response to our January 30th permit application, your letter of March 8, 2013, identified four areas needing further review and analysis: potential impact on navigation in Vancouver Turning Basin, further detail on the progress of current mitigation discussions with the fabricators, the overall effect of the proposed bridge height on the economic future of the river and further definition on some of the application materials that were more administrative in nature. Earlier, and under separate cover, we responded to the last item requested, the further definition needed on application materials. With this submittal we are providing the requested information on the Vancouver Turning Basin, current mitigation discussions with fabricators, and the economic analysis you requested. A brief summary of our findings follows.

Vancouver Turning Basin and navigation channels. A detailed analysis and discussion of the Vancouver Turning Basin is attached which provides the information necessary to demonstrate that the turning basin will still function as per its original intent, even with the bridge constructed in its planned location, and that there are no significant impacts to the turning basin, or the navigation channels proposed. In fact, analysis shows that there is marked improvement in the navigation channels for the predominant river users with the construction of this project. We understand and all agree that the attached evaluation does not, and is not intended to substitute for the current United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Navigation 408 permitting process, as the USACE permitting process is moving forward on a different, parallel path, with an expected conclusion date of July 30, 2014 as per the federal dashboard.

Economic analysis and mitigation. The economic vitality of the region will improve significantly with this project by providing better access to ports and businesses, and by providing safer and more reliable travel across the bridges. The construction of the proposed bridges will also allow continued expansion of the most common types of commercial river traffic, bulk commodity goods, while not unnecessarily or unreasonably impacting other markets on the river. In fact, the area immediately east of the bridges, the Columbia Business Center, that houses three fabricators among other tenants, will be able to continue to serve anticipated industrial demands into the future, with only limited potential impact, as identified in the enclosures. The enclosures specifically address the economic impact of the project on current river users and include a forward-looking analysis of the projected financial impact to the three fabricators upriver of the bridge, the long term effects to industries served by these industrial assets, and impact of the project on overall capacity of the waterway. Our analysis concludes that economic damages will be less than six percent (6%) of total revenues of the three fabricators and that the construction of the proposed bridge will have a very limited impact on the heavy industrial and marine-dependent industries on the river. As a result, the proposed bridge will have only a very limited impact on activities at the Columbia Business Center, and will have virtually no impact on other current or future upriver economic activity. Also enclosed is a summary of the ongoing mitigation discussions with the three impacted fabricators, which are on a clear path forward to reaching resolution. The enclosures identify the types of mitigation under consideration, key milestones, and the anticipated authorities and conditions for implementing the mitigation agreements.

Under separate cover, and as per your guidance, we have previously transmitted information regarding the format of the permit application itself (April 5, 2013), and the construction staging and sequencing plans for the proposed bridges (April 9, 2013). With all the information provided to date, we believe that we have demonstrated that the reasonable needs of navigation are met and provided the necessary analysis and data to allow you to fully evaluate the permit application materials and proceed to public notice.

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We look forward to our continued dialogue on this critical safety and mobility project that has both national and regional significance. If you need clarification on the information provided or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us directly, or contact Kris Strickler, CRC Oregon Project Director directly at the project.

Sincerely,



Matthew Garrett
Director
Oregon Department of Transportation



Lynn Peterson
Secretary of Transportation
Washington State Department of Transportation

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Enclosures:

1. Fabricator Mitigation update, April 18, 2013 Memo to Matthew Garrett and Lynn Peterson
2. USCG General Bridge Permit Navigation Channel and Turning Basin Report, April 17, 2013
3. USCG General Bridge Permit Economics Report, April 17, 2013

Cc: Nancy Boyd
Kris Strickler
Project Files