

Hines, Maurice

From: mw.durrell@comcast.net
Sent: Monday, October 24, 2011 10:19 PM
To: Columbia River Crossing
Subject: CRC - Environmental impact concern

- P-051-001** | My concern relates to the impact on environment by spending billions on the CRC with such a low return.
- P-051-002** | I-5 traffic has not increased as projected.
- P-051-003** | Light rail is light capacity and does little to reduce traffic.
- P-051-004** | The costs and impact of CRC on businesses are immense.
- P-051-005** | This project will spend billions of borrowed money and disrupt the environment for no good reason.

Mark Durrell
Camas, WA

P-051-001

As the only continuous north-south Interstate on the West Coast connecting the Canadian and Mexican borders, I-5 is vital to the local, regional, and national economy. The I-5 crossing also provides the primary transportation link between Vancouver and Portland, and the only direct connection between the downtown areas of these cities. As described in the DEIS, serious problems face this important crossing, including growing congestion, impaired freight movement, limited public transit options, high auto accident rates, substandard bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and vulnerability to failure in an earthquake. The fact that other important issues face our communities does not diminish the importance of addressing the problems plaguing the I-5 crossing.

CRC assumes funds allocated to other projects would remain dedicated to those projects, and anticipates needing to find new funds to finance the project. Funding for the project will come from a variety of sources including federal grants that would not be available to other transportation projects in the region, State of Oregon, State of Washington, and regional and local sources. In addition, it is assumed that the replacement bridge will be tolled. Please refer to Chapter 4 of the FEIS for a description of the current plans for funding construction and operation of the LPA.

P-051-002

Traffic forecasts reported in the DEIS and used to inform decisions on a locally preferred alternative were derived from adopted regional employment and population forecasts and state-of-the-art modeling and evaluation conducted by Metro, RTC and the project team. These traffic forecasts were reviewed by all project sponsor agencies as well as FTA and FHWA. In addition, an independent panel of traffic modeling experts was convened in October 2008 to review the modeling methods and findings. These experts concluded that the project's approach to estimating future travel demand was reasonable and that it relied on

accepted practices employed in metropolitan regions throughout the country. These findings are summarized in the “Columbia River Crossing Travel Demand Model Review Report” (November 25, 2008). This independent review confirmed the approach CRC modeling used to address multiple variables that can affect travel demand, including gasoline prices, tolling, travel demand measures, and induced development.

P-051-003

Light rail has been endorsed by every local Sponsoring Agency (Vancouver City Council, C-TRAN, RTC, Portland City Council, TriMet, and Metro), whose boards include elected officials from throughout the area.

Annual light rail passenger trips crossing the I-5 bridge in 2030 are projected to be 6.1 million, with daily ridership around 18,700. The travel time for the morning commute by light rail between downtown Vancouver and Pioneer Square in downtown Portland will be approximately 34 minutes. Light rail would travel on a dedicated right-of-way, with more reliable travel times than auto drivers dealing with unpredictable road conditions, traffic congestion, and parking challenges.

The CRC project planning for light rail incorporates and supports the principles of Vancouver's City Center Vision Plan. Downtown Vancouver has seen recent growth in higher density mixed use projects from three to 12 stories in height. In addition, another 4,000 downtown condominiums are proposed or pending as part of new developments. The core of Vancouver has, along with many of the larger corridors such as Fourth Plain Blvd, medium to high density residential development and an urban mix of uses. Transit demand in these areas is quite high, and ridership will increase with the introduction of light rail.

Long-term operation and maintenance of the new light rail line will be

funded through C-TRAN and TriMet. For its share of the operations and maintenance funding, C-TRAN plans on having a public vote.

P-051-004

The impacts of the proposed project on businesses are discussed in Section 3.4 of the FEIS. While there will be commercial displacements and other impacts, it is presumed that the investment in infrastructure will directly benefit the local and regional economy in many ways.

P-051-005

The FEIS discusses the reasons for the proposed action (Chapter 1) and discusses the environmental impacts (Chapter 3), which include adverse as well as beneficial impacts.