

Hines, Maurice

From: Debbie Peterson [debbie@debbiepeterson.org]
Sent: Monday, October 24, 2011 11:39 PM
To: Columbia River Crossing
Subject: FEIS Concerns

P-087-001

1. Why wasn't a supplemental Environmental Impact Statement written, when the Box web design was eliminated and a new design was put in place?

P-087-001

A supplemental DEIS was not required because the impacts of the composite deck truss fit within the parameters of impacts evaluated in the DEIS. The DEIS did not evaluate a single bridge type. It evaluated an envelope of impacts defined by vertical and horizontal parameters and general pier arrangements.

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P-087-002 | 2. Why weren't updated finance models used?

P-087-002

Please refer to Chapter 4 of the FEIS for a description of the current plans for funding construction and operation of the LPA. This discussion provides an updated assessment of likely funding sources for this project, though it is not common practice to receive funding commitments prior to completion of the alternative selection process.

At Governor Kitzhaber's request, the Oregon State Treasurer conducted an independent review of the CRC's financing plan and released a report in July 2011. CRC incorporated the treasurer's recommendation in Chapter 4 of the Final EIS.

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P-087-003 | 3. Why weren't traffic models that reflect actual decrease use on I-5 used?

P-087-003

Traffic volumes fluctuate and did decrease during some years. Traffic volumes obtained from the Oregon Department of Transportation's automatic traffic recorder (ATR) monitoring sites show that traffic volumes have, in fact, been increasing in the last few years. Whether the traffic volumes forecast for year 2030 will actually be achieved in that year should not be the only consideration. In its July 27, 2010 report, the Independent Review Panel expressed concerns about a longer horizon. The IRP commented "The desirability of living in the Portland/Vancouver region is not going to diminish, so populations will continue to grow.... [T]he IRP believes the greatest risk in the decision-making process is not over-sizing the bridges but not building enough capacity for the next 100 years." [1]

[1] Warne, Thomas (2010). I-5 Columbia River Crossing Project, Independent Review Panel, Final Report. Independent Review Panel, Olympia, July 27, 2010.

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P-087-004

4. Why weren't traffic models used that reflected a decrease in I-5 useage as tolls went up, over the course of the years?

P-087-004

By 2030, the region's population is expected to increase by one million people. This increase will result in more people needing to travel between home, work, school, recreation, etc. In 2005, 135,000 vehicles crossed the Columbia River on the Interstate Bridge, which led to 4-6 hours of congestion each weekday. By 2030, 184,000 are predicted to cross the river, which would lead to 15 hours of daily congestion if no action is taken.

The Columbia River Crossing project uses information gathered from Metro's nationally-recognized travel demand models to determine the project's effect on congestion. These models predict trip frequency, types or modes of transportation, destination, and time of day. Transportation planners use these models to analyze the effects of such factors as increased population and employment, transportation improvements, and new developments on the transportation system.

The traffic forecast for the project was developed for the year 2030. The analysis does not provide estimates of throughput and demand for different periods throughout the presumed 100 year life span of the bridge. Not only is it required, locally and federally, to focus on the twenty year planning horizon, it is also the longest period for which modeling has been deemed reliable. Changes in socioeconomics, and transportation technology may change significantly over the next 50 years, making scientifically reliable estimates throughout that period very suspect and speculative.

However, the tolling and project funding analysis has looked at a longer period of time. At Governor Kitzhaber's request, the Oregon State Treasurer conducted an independent review of the CRC's financing plan and released a report in July 2011. CRC incorporated the treasurer's recommendation in Chapter 4 of the Final EIS. Following the Record of Decision, the project will complete an investment-grade tolling analysis

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P-087-005 | 5. Why weren't episodic events and the pollution impact studied for the FEIS?

which will provide more specificity about the long term tolling revenue projections. The analysis of tolling did not assume that the tolls would increase in "real value" over time. As inflation has been estimated to rise at approximately 2.5% per year, the same annual increase was used as an assumption regarding the toll amount.

Details of the tolling system are still being refined as the project development enters the final design stage. The ultimate decision on any tolling options will be made by both the Washington and Oregon Transportation Commissions.

P-087-005

In air quality analysis, "episodic events" typically refer to those specific times that pollutant standards are exceeded. For some pollutants, weather conditions are associated with accumulation of emissions that then result in the exceedances. Weather conditions are included in the air quality modeling analysis conducted for the CRC EIS.

There have been no exceedances of standards in this region for many years, and forecasts estimate that pollutant levels will continue to decrease.

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P-087-006 | 6. What happens if I-1125 passes? Will you do an SEIS (Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement) for that financial scenario

P-087-006

A change in financing would be unlikely to require a supplemental DEIS. However, any change that occurs to the project will be reviewed to determine if it would change impacts. Those changes that would make a meaningful difference in impacts will be reviewed to determine if any supplemental analysis and documentation are required.

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P-087-007 | 9. Why as there been no economic forecast of the cost to business that will be remaining throughout construction?

P-087-007

The project has not attempted to quantify the potential profit/loss effect of construction on adjacent businesses, but the project has considered, and the FEIS recognizes, that temporary traffic changes, noise, and other construction activities will affect these businesses. The FEIS also identifies mitigation for reducing those impacts (Sections 3.4.4 and 3.4.5). The project also commits to coordinate and communicate with business owners to help further define this mitigation.

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P-087-008 | 8. What happens when The City initiative is presented on the ballot - with no City monies or employee support of the LPA is allowed?

P-087-008

The result of any initiatives approved by voters that affect the project would need to be addressed. We can not say in advance how initiatives that are not yet on the ballot would affect the project.

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P-087-009 | 10. Why is there no contingency money set aside for those businesses that will be hurt by the construction over seven years?

P-087-009

Direct payments to such businesses are not proposed, but the project has committed to funding measures to help reduce impacts to these businesses (see Section 3.4.5 in the FEIS).

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P-087-010

subsequent Changes and Analysis -- When was the information you have shown compiled and prepared? What is the current "locally Preferred Alternative?" How much of the analysis and data that you have been shown was created or compiled after April 2008? Tom Buchele goes on to say to the IRP. "I have no doubt that the vast majority of what the CRC has shown you fits that description and therefore was not and could not have been included in the DEIS. Why did CRC issue a DEIS before compiling this information and before conducting this analysis? The CRC in fact intends to dump all of most of this new analysis and information into an FEIS - which is too late for meaningful public participation under NEPA.

My question is. WHY did CRC do that as indicated in the last sentence?

P-087-010

A description of the locally preferred alternative is in Chapter 2 of the FEIS. The LPA is also described in the Record of Decision, and referred to as the Selected Alternative.

The information in the FEIS, that was not in the DEIS, reflects comments received on the DEIS, updated analysis, refined design information, and other information and input received after the issuance of the DEIS. This is the usual process when moving from a DEIS to an FEIS. At the beginning of each section of Chapter 3 in the FEIS is a summary of what information in that section is new since the DEIS. Much of this new information was provided to the public during the outreach that occurred between the DEIS and the FEIS. Please see the responses to O-002 for more information regarding the questions about comments by Tom Buchele and information and analysis completed after the DEIS.