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CitizenLetter®

An urgent message from a concerned citizen.

June 13, 2008

Chair Gail Achterman
Oregon Dept. of Transportation
Transportation Bldg., Room 135
355 Capitol Street, N.E.
Salem, OR 97301

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Columbia River Crossing ODOT
HEADQUARTERS

Dear Chair Gail Achterman,

P-0297-001 I am writing to urge you to take an important step in the drive to stop global warming and drop the Columbia River Crossing.

The Columbia River Crossing, a massive 12-lane bridge, accelerates the problem of global warming. Its \$4.2 billion cost would exhaust Oregon's capacity to fund alternative transit projects for a decade.

If we are to reach our climate-change goals, we must encourage people to get out of their cars and make cooler transit choices. The Columbia River Crossing will only increase traffic, boost global-warming emissions and force much tougher choices down the road. I urge you to stop it. Please tell me how you intend to address this issue.

Sincerely,

Jeff C Variel



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P-0297-001

The DEIS included an evaluation of how the CRC project would affect greenhouse gas emissions. The greenhouse gas analysis, which was reviewed and validated by an independent expert panel, found that the project would be expected to reduce the number of autos crossing the river each day, increase transit ridership, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. These effects are due primarily to reducing the duration of severe congestion, extending light rail transit to Vancouver, and adding a new toll to the highway crossing. The FEIS (Section 3.19) updates this evaluation and includes various additional measures that could further reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Regarding financing and other projects, there are practical limits on the number of major projects that can be implemented simultaneously. This was considered when regional leaders developed and adopted the Metropolitan Transportation Plan and the Regional Transportation Plan, both of which include the Columbia River Crossing project. Full financing for the CRC project has not yet been finalized. However, a large portion of the project funding is expected to be from tolls collected from vehicles using the new crossing – funds that would not be available without the project. Federal transit funds would not be used to pay for highway elements of the project. See Chapter 4 of the FEIS for further discussion of project financing.