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COLUMBIA RIVER CROSSING DRAFT EIS
PUBLIC HEARING

WEDNESDAY, MAY 28, 2008

RED LION HOTEL
VANCOUVER, WASHINGTON



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P-1058-001

1 Sharon?
 2 SHARON NASSAT: Thank you. For
 3 the record, my name is Sharon Nassat. My
 4 address is 1113 North Baldwin. Thank you
 5 very much for having hearings today. Good
 6 to see you gentlemen.
 7 I would like to talk about going back
 8 to the process we are in, which is the
 9 NEPA process. One of the best things
 10 about the NEPA process is it's set up in a
 11 form that gives you a chance every once in
 12 a while to stop, look over what you have
 13 done, evaluate it, reflect and decide if
 14 you are going forward with what you really
 15 need.
 16 Right now is one of those times. And
 17 what I have noticed from attending
 18 Portland Planning, city meetings,
 19 Vancouver meetings -- I don't know, I've
 20 been to many of them -- including RTC, is
 21 that all the Agencies are talking about
 22 that they would like to see more things.
 23 We have more questions than answers. I'm
 24 not ready to give a green light.
 25 Most of these meetings are on TV,

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As you rightly pointed out in your comment, government agencies have been significantly involved in providing project guidance throughout the CRC project. However, those you have mentioned support moving forward with the project, not analyzing new alternatives. The CRC Task Force - composed of 39 leaders from a broad cross section of Washington and Oregon communities – was tasked with advising the CRC project team and providing guidance and recommendations at key decision points. Public agencies, businesses, civic organizations, neighborhoods and freight, commuter and environmental groups were all represented on the Task Force. Following the close of the 60-day DEIS public comment period in July 2008, the CRC project's six local sponsor agencies selected a replacement I-5 bridge with light rail to Clark College as the project's Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA). These sponsor agencies, which include the Portland City Council, Vancouver City Council, TriMet Board, C-TRAN Board, Metro Council, RTC Board, considered the DEIS analysis, public comment, and a recommendation from the CRC Task Force when voting on the LPA. Following adoption of the LPA, a 10-member governor-appointed panel of government agencies and institutions was formed to advise the Oregon and Washington DOT on project development for the CRC project. The Project Sponsors Council (PSC) was charged with advising the project on completion of the FEIS, project design, project timeline, sustainable construction methods, consistency with greenhouse gas emission reduction goals and the financial plan. The PSC made recommendations after considering technical information, receiving input from relevant advisory groups and reviewing public comments. Regarding alternatives and components evaluated to date, evaluation of the five alternatives in the DEIS was preceded by screening of a wide array of possible solutions to the CRC project's Purpose and Need. Chapter 2 of the DEIS (Section 2.5) explains how the project's Sponsoring Agencies solicited the public, stakeholders, other agencies, tribes and other experts for ideas on how to meet the Purpose and Need.

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P-1058-001 1 including Portland access and are well
2 worth seeing. They are pointing those
3 things out because the process does not
4 have a viable range of options. A range
5 of options, transit and highway, are
6 needed in the NEPA process.

P-1058-002 7 The next part is that we are in the
8 middle of a -- the Columbia River Crossing
9 is multimillion dollar company with
10 60-some employees, several consultants.
11 It has been going on for a long time. It
12 is trying to produce a billion dollar or
13 several billion dollar product. And yet,
14 you have no directors and no CEO.
15 The sponsor Agencies who are
16 responsible were to set up a Sponsor
17 Council. They are to be making the
18 decisions. No offense to you gentlemen,
19 but we should be talking to the Sponsor
20 Agencies, the Council, the people who were
21 asked to make deliberation, make choices
22 and decisions.
23 We have a staff recommendation. It
24 is the same as the CEO board members of
25 multimillion dollar company having their

This effort produced a long list of potential solutions, such as new transportation corridors across the Columbia River, various transit modes, tolling, other demand management measures, and techniques for operating the existing highway system more efficiently. After identifying this wide array of options, the project evaluated whether and how they met the project's Purpose and Need. Components that increased capacity or helped reduce travel demand without increasing capacity were advanced for further evaluation. See Appendix C of the DEIS for an explanation and the results from early screening processes. The DEIS analyzed the full range of reasonable alternatives, which included the four build alternatives, and variations on each based on their individual components and various options. The range varied from No-Build, to alternatives that provided varying levels of highway improvements, different high capacity transit modes, different transit alignments and termini, and different tolling options. Many other components and combinations were evaluated prior to beginning the DEIS, but were dropped when analyses and input indicated that they would not adequately meet the Purpose and Need.

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Following the close of the 60-day DEIS comment period and the selection of an LPA, a 10-member governor-appointed panel was formed to advise the Oregon and Washington DOT on project development for the CRC project. The Project Sponsors Council (PSC) was charged with advising the project on completion of the FEIS, project design, project timeline, sustainable construction methods, consistency with greenhouse gas emission reduction goals and the financial plan, as well as they number of lanes on the bridge. The PSC made recommendations after considering technical information, receiving input from relevant advisory groups and reviewing public comments. See Chapter 2 (Section 2.7) of the FEIS for details on the PSC's recommendations and Chapter 6 and Appendix B of the FEIS for a description of public involvement activities that occurred after the DEIS was published.

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P-1058-003

1 staff making all the decisions.
 2 The NEPA process is meant to stop and
 3 reflect. All over the country, it does
 4 that several times. There is absolutely
 5 no shame and nothing wrong with stopping
 6 and doing this and taking a look at it.
 7 The idea that we are going to get the
 8 Government -- our Government -- to follow
 9 the law by producing a lawsuit is totally
 10 beneath us. We do not need our dirty
 11 laundry nationally washed.
 12 HAL DENGERINK: Thank you. Jon.
 13 JON HAUGEN: Good evening. My name
 14 is Jon Haugen, H-a-u-g-e-n, and I reside
 15 at 13502 Northwest 49th Avenue in
 16 Vancouver, Washington. I've read the
 17 Columbia River Crossing Draft
 18 Environmental Impact Statement.
 19 It seems that three years ago and
 20 80 million dollars ago, the Planners were
 21 told to produce a document to support
 22 building -- to support spending 4.1
 23 billion dollars to replace six lanes of
 24 traffic with six lanes of traffic with
 25 light rail.

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Extensive technical and public review and input has been included in all phases of the CRC project, from developing a purpose and need statement, screening a wide variety of alternatives, and developing a Draft and Final EIS. A supplemental draft is required if changes to alternatives after the draft are substantial and/ or if there are new significant impacts not previously discussed in the draft and/or there are changes in laws or regulations after the draft. The DEIS identified potential mitigation measures for all potentially significant as well as many non-significant impacts, and the FEIS further analyzes and develops mitigation measures and plans to a higher level of detail and refinement. CEQ NEPA regulations (40 CFR 1502.9(c)) do not require agencies to prepare a supplemental draft EIS just because an FEIS includes refined alternatives and additional information. Such changes are typical and expected in the planning process, and are consistent with CEQ and FHWA NEPA regulations. Between publication of the DEIS and FEIS, FTA and FHWA prepared three NEPA re-evaluations and a documented categorical exclusion (DCE) to complete changes in the project since the DEIS. The NEPA re-evaluations addressed the change in the project from: 1) the 17th Street transit alignment, 2) the composite deck truss bridge type, and 3) all other changes in design between the DEIS and the FEIS. The DCE addressed the impacts from the track work on the steel bridge.

Both agencies concluded from these evaluations that these changes and new information would not result in any significant environmental impacts that were not previously considered in the DEIS. For more information, see Appendix O of the FEIS.

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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

STATE OF WASHINGTON)
County of Clark)

I, Cathy S. Taylor, a notary public
for the State of Washington do hereby
certify that I transcribed to the best of
my ability said proceedings written by me
in machine shorthand and thereafter
reduced to typewriting; and that the
foregoing transcript constitutes a full,
true and accurate record of said
proceedings and of the whole thereof.

Witness my hand and notarial seal
this 16th day of June, 2008.

Cathy S. Taylor, RPR, CSR
Notary Public for the State of Washington
My Commission expires April 15, 2009