

RECEIVED

SEP 06 2006

September 1, 2006

Columbia River Crossing

Dr. Hal Dengerink
Co-Chair
Columbia River Crossing Task Force
700 Washington Street
Vancouver, WA 98660

Mr. Henry Hewitt
Co-Chair
Columbia River Crossing Task Force
700 Washington Street
Vancouver, WA 98660

Dear Mr. Dengerink and Mr. Hewitt:

After months of engaging in the process to define and narrow components and package alternatives, the business representatives to the Columbia River Crossing Task Force would like to take this opportunity to summarize our objectives for this project.

As a point of beginning, we expect that any project will result in an improvement over current conditions. This bridge must serve the community for the next century. It is critical that transportation projects of this physical and financial scope are evaluated within a regional, and in this case national, context of economic and transportation needs and impacts. The placement and design must ensure efficient and reliable movement of people and goods well into the future.

In order to accomplish the above, and for the business community to support this project, there are three critical issues that must be addressed:

- ◆ Congestion reduction. As the recent Portland Cost of Congestion study noted, increasing congestion has substantial impacts on our region's economic competitiveness and quality of life. It is critical that we use this rare opportunity to construct a new bridge crossing that lessens the traffic congestion through this critical transportation link.
- ◆ Capacity enhancement. This is a critical part of ensuring a reduction in congestion levels on the crossing. While multi-modal solutions, including improved public transit, bike and pedestrian facilities are needed, it is critical that road capacity also be included. Economic activities, whether freight or a single occupancy vehicle used for sales, service or business, cannot readily be served by alternative modes. To ensure the region's economic competitiveness, both domestically and in the global marketplace, adding road capacity is essential.
- ◆ Maintain/improve access. Equally critical is ensuring access to the economic centers in the bridge influence area. Within that geographic boundary of the BIA exist the Ports of Portland and Vancouver, some of the region's most productive industrial districts, as well as downtown Vancouver. Access must be maintained or improved to Columbia Boulevard, Marine Drive, Victory Boulevard, Hayden Island, Mill Plain Boulevard, Fourth Plain Boulevard, Downtown Vancouver/6th St., and Highway 14.

Having identified our critical issues that must be addressed, we have a number of comments, questions and suggestions to address in the coming months.

First, it is important to identify what the measure of success is. For instance, to determine whether there is sufficient added capacity, will the measure be the number of people moving over the crossing and through the bridge influence, or is the measure focused on the number of vehicles? Obviously, these two measures could result in different outcomes. In order to critically evaluate project alternatives and their impacts on congestion, capacity and access, defining how we will measure success is essential.

Second, the previous work of the I-5 Partnership identified the need for five lanes on the bridge crossing (three through lanes and two add/merge lanes). Given updated population forecasts, which reveal a much faster influx of additional residents than previously anticipated, as well as efforts to update freight and traffic models in response to this new information, the need for three through lanes must be reconfirmed and additional evaluation should be undertaken to determine if two supplemental lanes are sufficient or whether additional lanes should be considered.

Third, information is needed regarding what is a realistic mode split between cars and the various forms of alternative transit. Is there a specific goal? Is that goal realistic and feasible to accomplish? The decision on a locally preferred alternative will be impacted by the amount of traffic we need to accommodate on roadways as well as on public transportation. By understanding this information, we can evaluate project alternatives more realistically against needs.

Finally, because of the substantial regional, national and global economic impacts of this bridge crossing, we believe it is appropriate for project staff to provide context to the task force members. Much like the Environmental Justice report, an Economic Report would provide task force members with critical information that should be considered during project alternative evaluation. A firm understanding among task force members of the economic benefits and implications of the bridge crossing will help ensure the final decision on locally preferred alternatives adequately takes into account our region's continued competitiveness and quality of life.

Again, this is a once in a lifetime opportunity to address this vital transportation link. It is critical that this project results in an improvement to the crossing in the long-term and addresses the congestion, capacity and access issues that are impacting our regional economies and quality of life. We hope that this letter clarifies our position and identifies some areas that need further attention. We look forward to continuing to work through these issues to develop a locally preferred alternative that meets the needs of our economy and our population for decades to come.

Sincerely,



Tom Zelenka
Oregon Freight Advisory Committee



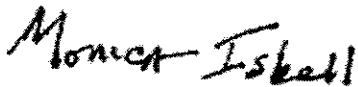
Larry Paulson
Port of Vancouver



Bill Wyatt
Port of Portland



Bob Byrd
Identity Clark County



Monica Isbell
Portland Business Alliance



Bart Phillips
Columbia River Economic Development
Council



Bob Russell
Oregon Trucking Association



Ed Lynch
Vancouver National Historic Reserve Trust



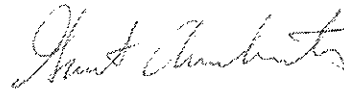
Rich Brown
Portland Business Alliance



Scot Walstra
Greater Vancouver Chamber of Commerce



Jonathan Schlueter
Westside Economic Alliance



Grant Armbruster
Portland Business Alliance