

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: No fiscal impact

Action:	Be Adopted
Vote:	7 - 0 - 0
Yeas:	Buckley, Butler, Gilman, Read, Smith G., Tomei, Beyer
Nays:	0
Exc.:	0
Prepared By:	Judith Callens, Administrator
Meeting Dates:	5/21, 5/30

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Declares legislative support for the Columbia River Crossing Project. Recognizes that the project will require strong partnerships among all levels of government, the private sector, and citizens of Oregon and Washington. Recognizes the importance of various modes of transportation as well as the environment, businesses, and neighborhoods affected. Declares support for the continuation of bi-state and bi-partisan efforts in planning, coordinating, and funding the project and for the cooperation of the federal government in providing funding and streamlining the regulatory process.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Need for increased transportation capacity over Columbia River
- Five crossing alternatives under consideration; funding options
- Decision making process and federal, state, and local roles
- Impacts to neighborhoods near the crossing
- Light rail resistance by Vancouver Washington
- Importance of continued bi-state discussions, coordination and cooperation

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: No amendment.

BACKGROUND: The Interstate 5 highway bridges over the Columbia River are currently over capacity and create one of the worst bottlenecks to commerce and the movement of people on the West Coast. The northbound bridge was built in 1917, and the southbound bridge in 1958. Both bridges are lift spans that must be raised almost daily to allow certain ships to pass. The number of interchange exits and entrances in the five-mile area effectively reduce the through-travel lanes to two in each direction, creating hours-long congestion in the morning and evening, and whenever even a minor incident occurs on the bridge. The lack of shoulder width precludes pulling a stalled or disabled vehicle out of the travel lanes. Current traffic of 125,000 vehicles per weekday is expected to reach 180,000 vehicles a day by 2020.

Bi-state and multi-jurisdiction committees began meeting in the 1990's, most recently the I-5 Transportation and Trade Partnership in 2001, followed by the Columbia River Crossing Task Force. One project completed in north Vancouver and a series of projects in the Delta Park area just south of the Columbia, which will begin construction next year, are part of the congestion relief efforts recommended by these committees. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement process is underway for the Columbia crossing itself. Several alternatives, including a "no-build" option, will be taken through the analysis. The other two alternatives recommended by the project team at this point are a replacement bridge with "bus rapid transit" service and a replacement bridge with light rail transit.