

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: No fiscal impact

Action: Be Adopted
Vote: 5 - 0 - 0
Yeas: Deckert, George L., Monnes Anderson, Starr, Metsger
Nays: 0
Exc.: 0
Prepared By: Janet Adkins, Administrator
Meeting Dates: 2/16

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:

- Bi-state scoping efforts dating back to the 1990's
- History of the current crossings - construction, funding, use, and limitations
- Project costs of a new bridge and interchanges – funding options
- Decision making process and federal, state, and local roles
- Whether the focus of the project is too narrow, whether other approaches should still be considered
- Comparison of Oregon and Washington Public Private Partnership authorities
- When private sector involvement should begin
- Importance of continued bi-state cooperation

Note: Discussion included several members of the Washington State Senate Transportation Committee in a joint meeting.

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.

2/22/2007 8:20:00 AM

This summary has not been adopted or officially endorsed by action of the committee.