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Subject: Testimony to the Interstate-5 Bridge Replacement Project Joint Legislative Committee February 11, 2013

A high capacity I-5 Columbia River Crossing is truly needed to reduce congestion and keep interstate commerce in the corridor flowing. Personally, I would have preferred a new less costly I-5 highway only bridge along with a seismic retrofit and repurposing of the existing historical bridges to accommodate local traffic, transit alternatives and wider sidewalks for bicycles and pedestrians; but that type of an option was never fully explored.

The problem with the current plan is the funding. The scheme is totally unjust and lacks equity. One hundred percent of the federal dollars for the project - including for light rail through the FTA - will be from the Federal Highway Trust Fund. The money in that fund is supported by the federal tax on motor fuels - primarily the federal gas tax paid by highway users. The states of Oregon and Washington are both expected to kick in \$450 million each which is projected to come from motorist paid taxes and fees. The remainder of the funding - approximately \$1.3 billion - is targeted to come from tolling the highway component of the crossing. Following the money back to the revenue source; 100% of the funding for the entire project is being assessed only on the highway users.

If the CRC was solely a highway project, that could be considered acceptable. However, because the CRC project also includes a multi-state light rail line and a super-sized, separated bicycle deck on the bridge with a surplus of connecting bicycle infrastructure; the current funding plan is discriminatory. Hammering only the highway users with high and excessive tolls will have a noticeable negative impact on the local economy, especially for small businesses and small service companies that have accounts on both sides of the river. The CRC is a multi-modal transportation project, not a social engineering project. It should also be noted that Clark County residents who drive across the river to work in Oregon also pay Oregon income taxes.

In that that both transit passengers and bicyclists will benefit from the project, these user groups need to proportionally help pay for the project. To apply equity and justice to the funding plan, transit passengers need to be assessed a fare surcharge for traversing the crossing, and bicyclists need to pay a toll. The dollar amount of the highway tolls could then be reduced. With a mandate that only minimal charges be assessed to the users of all transport modes, paying for the crossing becomes considerably more equitable.

Furthermore, the users of all modes of transport including bicyclists, transit passengers and highway users should continue to have a free access alternative route between the Portland metro area and Clark County - this being I-205. If the CRC user fees are kept at minimal levels - including for motorists - factoring in a time savings and fuel costs where the CRC is the most direct route, there should be little diversion to avoid paying a small crossing charge.

In closing, I strongly urge this committee to adopt the necessary resolutions and/or amendments that will expand the collection of state dollars and user charges for a new CRC to include the users of all transport modes, and in turn, minimize the tolls for highway users whom will still be paying for more than their share of the project.

Respectfully Submitted,
Terry Parker, Northeast Portland

