

**R. P. JOE SMITH**  
2211 N.E. 21<sup>st</sup> Ave.  
Portland, Oregon, 97212-4623  
(503) 287-6577 FAX 287-9002  
[joe@smithcompound.com](mailto:joe@smithcompound.com)

The Columbia River Crossing Project, now called the Interstate-5 Bridge Replacement Project, has ridden this far on a wave of hype and mendacity. There are four fundamental flaws in this project which have been covered up, and about which the project has consistently made false representations.

**Flaw Number One:**

There are only two highway bridges across the Columbia in the Portland region. This project seeks to jam more cars and trucks onto an already-congested freeway, instead of sensibly adding new arterial bridges, construction of which could start sooner, finish quicker, cost less money, and would take traffic off the freeway – and which would also save the 900 plus jobs this project will destroy.

**Flaw Number Two:**

The project calls for rebuilding the five interchanges closest to the river at a cost exceeding \$1.7 billion, more than half the cost of this project. The net effect of these five interchanges will be to jam more cars and trucks onto an already-congested freeway.

**Flaw Number Three:**

The design proposes to extend the light rail Yellow Line from the Expo Center to Vancouver, with three stations in Vancouver, plus three parking garages at those stations costing \$167 million. There will be 10 stops between the closest Vancouver station and downtown Portland. That means the light rail trip from the closest Vancouver station to downtown Portland will take 38 minutes; that compares to 20 minutes on the C-Tran Bus in the HOV lane, and 15 minutes on Amtrak from Vancouver station to Union Station. Yet the Final Environmental Impact Statement claims that 37% of the trips across the Columbia in the key traffic modeling year of 2030 will be taken by light rail. That number is a joke; a realistic projection is more like 10%. Again, the project as proposed will produce not less, but more congestion on I-5.

**Flaw Number Four:**

The proposed project forever forecloses the possibility of developing low-draft high-superstructure cruise and barge traffic up and down the river.

In sum, as shown by the only independent study of traffic modeling on the CRC, (done by the national engineering firm URS for Portland Mayor Sam Adams,) the truth is that this new bridge will NOT reduce congestion on I-5, especially not in the southbound a.m. peak when six lanes going south narrow to three lanes at Delta Park, causing a massive traffic jam every weekday morning within two miles of the bridge, backing traffic all the way back onto the proposed mega-bridge.

There is a clear need to facilitate freight traffic across, and up and down, the Columbia River. This mega-project proposes to spend over three billion dollars to do neither. We can, and we must, do better.