

Sen. Shields,

I hope that the start of the legislative session is going well for you and your staff.

I learned today that a special committee has been established to discuss and vote on Columbia River Crossing (or now, as it is called, the I-5 "Bridge Replacement") funding. I know that you do not sit on this committee, but I hope that you will use your leadership on environmental issues and experience in Salem to oppose advancing this project in it's current form.

The CRC project is not a bridge replacement project. It's a highway mega-project which includes a \$3.6+ billion freeway expansion project along a five-mile stretch of Interstate 5 between North Portland and Vancouver, Washington. Not only will it be the most expensive public project in the region's history, costing more than \$4,000 per family in the region and saddling future generations with debt for 30+ years, but it will increase climate change pollution by 32%, harm people's health in areas already suffering from poor air quality, undermine our region's vision of a sustainable economy, and result in over eight hours a day of congestion in the Rose Quarter (I work full-time in the Rose Quarter, in a building about a 100 yards way from the highway with on and off ramps surrounding. How will additional congestion on I-5 and the surrounding streets affect my air quality?).

A more responsible direction would reduce global warming pollution to meet Oregon's climate change laws rather than spending billions on a five-mile long highway expansion that encourages more driving. The CRC project must be modified to improve transportation options, reduce air pollution, and spend our money wisely. I encourage you to press your colleagues to slow down the process and spend time studying the Plan B and other options that reflect our regions values.

Lastly, I would like to note my dissatisfaction with the Democratic party leadership within both chambers in Salem on their attempt to quickly rush through this funding legislation quickly through a special joint committee, as oppose to its expect path through the transportation committees in both chambers. This move to limit public participation is not what I would have expected out of your party's leadership.

--Ms. Sasha Tenzin  
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