

Dear Representative Jeff Barker,

We've exchanged phone messages in the not too distant past, and I very much appreciate you taking the time to return a constituent call.

I'm writing you today to express my deep concerns regarding the costly, risky, oft-maligned CRC mega-highway project.

But first let me tell you what I love about our region and our state. I love that our region is filled with pioneers and free thinkers. Because of our independence and leadership, we have led the way in areas such as regional land use and transportation planning (the UGB, Metro, and a renowned school of planning at PSU), environmental protection (the 1971 bottle bill: first in the nation), and supporting people using their lungs and their legs to get around (ever since the Oregon Bicycle Bill and more recently with work by Travel Oregon, our state is seen as a destination for bicycling tourists from around the country).

Today, as you likely know, there is a joint committee meeting to discuss the future of the CRC (aka BRP). This as you also likely know is a five mile freeway widening project which is masquerading as a bridge project. In reality, only about a quarter of the cost is the bridge work, and about a fifth of the length is the bridge; the largest amount of money (roughly 1/2 of the cost) is for interchanges. The interchange on Hayden Island alone is around \$600 million, which makes it roughly ten times the cost of the \$65 million Helvatia / US 26 interchange (currently one of the biggest projects in the region).

I understand that the CRC is a priority for certain members of leadership. However, I am unable to see why. If I were building a 21st century transportation project connecting two great states, I would want to see a project that helps us promote the kind of land use planning we're famous for, reduces our impact on global warming, provides an improvement in commute times for transit riders, incorporates a lift or opening span to accommodate for the needs of current and future river users, and does not create an unreasonable climb for pedestrians and cyclists. The current design achieves none of these objectives, and will likely lead to spillover onto I-205 because there is no plan to place tolls on that facility. On top of that, a senior member of the Washington Senate Transportation Committee has raised concerns about the negative impacts to current river users (the bridge is too short) and the fact that a typical AM commuter would save perhaps a minute off a commute (\$4-\$10 billion for 60 seconds?!).

Please consider:

- The project's analysis shows that by 2030, the corridor would see a greenhouse gas increase of 32% over 2005 levels.

- A report by Oregon Treasurer Ted Wheeler found that "key assumptions in the traffic and toll revenue forecast used in the 2008 [Draft Environmental Impact Statement] are now outdated", and says that tolling will result in up to \$598 million less than predicted earlier.

- Many of the stated rationale for the project has been discredited:
www.wweek.com/portland/article-17566-a_bridge_too_false.html

- The CRC is our first attempt at building a mega-project this scale. Such projects have been built around the world for decades, allowing academics to study them. The key findings? 90% of mega-projects go over budget. Projections haven't improved over the past 70 years, or across 20 nations. Bridge projects go over budget by an average of 34%. On just the CRC base \$3.6 billion, that's \$1.224 billion.

Washington Senator Don Benton concludes:

Add in what I gather are serious misgivings from Oregon lawmakers, and the CRC project could be in for quite a delay. So be it. **As planned the project is simply too short-sighted to justify clinging to a timeline and charging ahead**, despite the substantial amount of money and time sunk into it already.

Please help slow this down. The investment grade analysis of tolling isn't even done yet, and so we have no idea if the largest part of the funding plan would work. I would hate to see other vital projects and programs around the state cut because we couldn't wait one more year on a 100 year facility.

Over the years, Oregon has been made the great state it is today by the work of pioneers and free thinkers in leadership positions. Today, in 2013, Oregon needs pioneers and free thinkers again to stand up and put a hold on this costly, risky, troubled mega project. I hope I can count on you to be one of them.

Sincerely,

~ Peter Welte

Aloha, Oregon