

February 12, 2014



Members of the Oregon House Transportation and Economic Development Committee:

Thank you for considering support of the Columbia River Crossing project with Oregon as the lead entity. Although I am unable to be there today to address your committee, I want to offer my point of view.

I approach this with a unique perspective. For those who do not know me, I was elected to represent the Gresham area in the Oregon House in 1993 and 1995. After I moved to Washington I lobbied for county governments for over ten years, including large capital and transportation projects. In 2011 I was selected to serve a vacant seat representing the Vancouver area. I have since won two elections. I live within walking distance of the bridge and have walked and driven over it many times. I have spent many hours in traffic while visiting family in Portland. I am proud and honored to have served in two states.

I was also an intermittent observer during the more than 10 years that the CRC Project was developed and approved. I agree it was not a pretty sight. However, we find ourselves with a decision to make and deadlines to meet. Here are some of the reasons why you should consider moving forward:

- We need a bridge and waiting until a disaster is never a good plan
- Maintenance and delays cost both of our economies a great deal of money
- Unnecessary accidents cost families and loved ones too much
- More than 60,000 people in Vancouver cross the bridge each day to work and pay Oregon income tax
- Moving goods faster will result in economic advantages for all
- Most bridge construction projects have a lead agency and begin their operations with tolls
- The skills and expertise of a mega project such as this one exist and the risk can be managed
- Many of the complaints about the design and cost of the current proposal have been addressed and stem from the unique requirements of the site and adjacent geographical and economic features

Let's not forget that we all came to our legislative bodies to do a job, not to keep a job. Many of our decisions are not easy and we oftentimes do not know everything we'd like to know about unintended consequences. When I moved to Gresham three weeks before MAX began rolling, I heard nothing but anger and disgust about its existence. Everyone I spoke to during my hunt for a home wished for a different transportation solution. After operations began, the name MAX was spoken with pride. Downtown businesses regretted not having a station closer to their center. I moved within walking distance and my young children, husband and I used the system on a regular basis.

My point is that we are together at a tipping point. This is a heavy lift and the voices of negativity are loud. I believe it is time to build this bridge that will provide for a shared regional economy that needs to grow. It will create jobs. And it will build on the difficult decisions already made to move forward with a challenging project.

**Sharon Wylie**  
49<sup>th</sup> Legislative District

