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**Subject: The Columbia River Crossing - Testimony to the Oregon House Transportation and Economic Development Committee, February 12, 2014**

First, let me say I support in principal the lower cost concept proposal made by Jim Howell that includes a new I-5 highway bridge for through traffic - without light rail - while retaining the existing historical bridges for local traffic, transit including a future possibility of adding light rail, and with wider sidewalks for bicycles and pedestrians. It is somewhat similar to the what I proposed in DEIS testimony. One of the benefits with this concept is that transit operations are at street level. I do however differ with Jim on some of the details and believe any new through traffic bridge should be high enough so that it does not need a draw span.

The predominant problems with the CRC proposal on the table are the cost, the financial plan and the tolling. The excessively high tolls for highway users will divert as many as 40,000 cars and trucks daily over the I-205 bridge. That in turn will have a negative neighborhood livability impact with considerably more traffic on local streets such as Sandy Boulevard, and further congest I-84. For that reason, the Central Northeast Neighbors coalition of Portland neighborhoods has voted to oppose the CRC project.

If you follow the money back to it's source with the knowledge that FTA dollars are siphoned off from the Federal Highway Trust Fund supported by the tax on motor fuels, the highway users are paying for nearly 100% of the CRC price tag - including for light rail and bicycle infrastructure. Little if any federal dollars will be for the highway portion of project even though the majority of federal dollars will come from the highway users.

In that the alternative mode users will receive an enormous infrastructure benefit without paying for it, the tolling levied on highway users becomes a form of tax discrimination - no different than age, gender, race, religious or sexual preference discrimination. Additionally, the disproportionate tolling is a form of highway rationing based on level of income.

An equitable funding method is missing. The current CRC plan is more of a debt ridden social engineering project than a bridge to better connect the two sides of the Columbia. Without adjusting the auto and light truck highway tolls not to exceed the price of a two hour transit fare for an all day bridge access pass along with similar percentage reductions for large trucks thereby reducing diversion to I-205; and without adding a surcharge to transit fares so that transit riders pay a large chunk of the local match for light rail; and without tolling bicyclists so that bicyclists pay their own way for the super-sized bicycle deck on the bridge and all the extra bicycle infrastructure that has been tacked on to the CRC; the project needs to be scrapped.

Respectfully submitted,

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