

Remarks by FTA Regional Administrator Rick Krochalis before the Oregon House Committee on Transportation and Economic Development, February 12, 2014

Representative Read and members of the House Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before your committee today. Some of you have previously met with the former Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Administrator, Peter Rogoff, regarding this project. In some ways, a lot has changed since you met with Peter Rogoff, who is now the Acting Under Secretary for Policy for US Department of Transportation (DOT), and in other ways, not much has changed. What I mean by that is FTA along with Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) are still awaiting financial commitments from local and State Governments who may choose to support the project that was defined in the Federal Record of Decision, dated December 7, 2011, based on the CRC Final Environmental Impact Statement.

So the choice is now with the State of Oregon and TriMet as partners in this Oregon led, infrastructure project.

FTA along with FHWA has been following this project for over a decade. We have managed the environmental review process for the project as required by the National Environmental Policy Act. We closely monitored the Coast Guard permitting process along with the negotiations to mitigate impacts to several maritime users that were affected by the proposed bridge height. And we certainly understand the complexity of solving the congestion and safety problems posed by the aging bridges that cross the Columbia River.

Based on previous progress, the Project appeared in the President's proposed FY 13 and 14 budgets for FTA New Starts program. Due to sequestration, the project received no funding in FY 13, however, the recently passed FT 14 Appropriations Act provided \$ 65 M for the project. These funds would be a part of the planned Full Funding Grant Agreement, if approved, for the proposed total of \$850 M from FTA along with the planned TIFIA loan, if the State of Oregon decides to make the financial commitment to proceed with the project.

I want to assure you as the Legislature contemplates such a major investment, that US DOT will continue to conduct rigorous federal review and oversight before any construction is authorized. So while you may place a variety of safeguards in any proposed funding package that you may approve, we are also committed to insuring that the project's financial plan, design and construction meet all federal standards before we provide our stamp of approval.

We are certainly available to respond to questions that you may have now or at a later time. Thank you.