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Consultant
Port of Morrow
Testimony to
House Committee on Transportation and Economic Development
February 12, 2014

Chairman Read and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on our support of the Columbia River Crossing project. My name is Ann-Marie Lundberg and I am here representing Gary Neal and the Port of Morrow.

Our port is the largest upriver port in terms of volumes handled and the amount of developed and developable industrial lands. The Port owns more than 12,000 acres of which 2,500 acres are zoned for industrial development. Our business portfolio includes; food processing industries, grain exports, various biofuel manufacturers, power generation and most recently data farms.

An economic impact analysis commissioned by the Port and completed in June 2013 states that Port-related businesses accounted for more than \$1.6 billion in annual economic output in 2011, up from about \$850 million in 2006.¹ The growth continues, ConAgra Lamb Weston is in the process of constructing a \$300 million expansion of their food processing facility. The Port is always active in fielding inquiries and proposing new development opportunities. We are recognized as *the* economic driver in this region.

One key element to the success of current and future businesses is an efficient transportation network. We have barge, truck and rail modes accessible to our shippers. The modes most directly affected by the Columbia River Crossing Project are barge and truck. Our Port handles containers, agricultural products and construction materials by barge and large volumes of trucked products.

We are directly connected to the Ports of Portland and Vancouver Washington. We handle approximately 22,000 containers per year by barge of solid waste from Vancouver, Washington which goes to the Finley Butte landfill in Morrow County. This business provides much needed tax revenue to our county and jobs in our community. We also handle grain products which are barged to the export elevators in Portland and Vancouver as well as wood chips and aggregates which also move by barge. Port of Morrow provides the link between truck and barge in the export and domestic logistics chain. The safety and efficiency of the barging network into the future is critical for our local agricultural community and for the county.

¹ Port of Morrow, Oregon, Economic Impact Analysis June 11, 2013

Food processing and agricultural companies such as Con-Agra Lamb Weston, Oregon Potato Company, Boardman Foods, Morrow Cold Storage, Columbia River Processing, Oregon Hay, Western Alfalfa and Cascade Specialties transport products to national and international markets. Timely and cost effective truck delivery to hub facilities in Portland such as the international container terminal and truck and rail distribution facilities makes a difference in the competitiveness of the products which are manufactured in Morrow County. Portland is the transportation and economic hub for Oregon and Southwest Washington and our connectivity to the hub network is a cornerstone of our economic success moving forward. Congestion on the roads to and from marine terminals such as Marine Drive adds cost and time to the products we manufacture and with that renders them less competitive in the international and domestic markets.

Port of Morrow strives to build on our past success. We are targeting additional food processing and biofuel companies among many other industries. Our future and our ability to continue to be the economic engine for our area is heavily dependent on our connection to the transportation facilities in the Portland metropolitan region.

Port of Morrow has invested approximately \$62 million in infrastructure improvements during the past 10 years. We have built roads, rail, water systems, warehouses and improved our barge facilities. This investment has leveraged approximately \$386 million in private investments by companies such as Pacific Ethanol, RDO Calbee, Zechem, Reclaim Technologies and the owners of the data centers. We have played our part in ensuring that our region will be competitive in this new century. We need the same commitment from our partners in other regions, Morrow County cannot be competitive into the future without modern and efficient connections to ports, rivers and roads. We urge you to move forward with the CRC project.

Thank you for your time and attention regarding this important project. The Port of Morrow looks forward to working with you to see it through to conclusion.

Editorial Submitted to East Oregonian

I-5 Bridge Replacement – Time for Oregon to lead

Almost exactly one year ago in an editorial, the East Oregonian reminded us, “We are a long way from the mouth of the Columbia River, but many of Eastern Oregon’s exports head down that big, beautiful river.” (Columbia crossing: Improved bridge will help entire state, East Oregonian, Feb. 11, 2013)

We agree that our side of the state should, therefore, have some voice in a debate over building a new Interstate 5 bridge with improved infrastructure, which will assist both river traffic and freight traveling on the roadway. With the Washington legislature’s decision not to act on the Columbia River Crossing, Oregon was left with the choice of abandoning a critical project that has been planned and analyzed for nearly a decade or forging ahead with a phased, Oregon-led option.

With extensive review from both the Oregon State Treasurer’s Office, the Oregon Department of Justice, leadership from Governor John Kitzhaber, business and community leaders and many others, we now have an Oregon-led project that is technically, administratively, operationally, financially and legally possible.

Replacing this bridge is a priority for Oregon and it is worth noting that there is no alternative plan that is less complicated or less expensive. While we acknowledge that this is a big investment for our state, there is much greater cost to all of us if we do nothing. Oregon companies across the state rely on a functioning river and road network to get goods to market. This is true for the Port of Morrow and the following port businesses: Oregon Potato Company, Boardman Foods, Cascade Specialties, Oregon Hay, Barenbrug USA, Calbee North America, Tredit Tire and Collins Companies.

On the west end of the river, surface transport and port facilities converge in Portland and Vancouver, making the Port of Portland’s surrounding area a crossroads for all modes of transportation. The Columbia River Crossing would improve daily flow for the approximately 125,000 automobiles, trucks and buses navigating the bridge. Portland area marine traffic would also improve by eliminating the need for a bridge lift, which is the only remaining bridge of its type in the Interstate system, according to the Port of Portland.

In summation, ignoring the current problems at the crossing and doing nothing at this critical point is not an acceptable outcome.

It is worth noting that few people are remembered for what they didn’t do. We’d like to urge the Oregon Legislature to seize this moment, act positively and fund this project. In the years ahead, citizens from all across this state will look back favorably upon what we did complete this project.

Gary Neal, Port of Morrow General Manager

Bob Levy, Port of Portland Commissioner, Windy River Farms Owner

Frank Tiegs, Oregon Potato Company President

Don Rice, Greenwood Resources Managing Director North America

Gene Jensen, Calbee North America President

Marty Myers, Threemile Canyon Farms General Manager

Gary Frederickson, Oregon Hay Products President and Owner

Carl Hearn, Cascade Specialties General Manager

Debbie Radie, Boardman Foods Vice President of Operations