

Testimony against Oregon "going it alone" on the Columbia River Crossing

Kay Bridges, age 77 and small business owner. I built a successful business for 25 years by Washington Square delivering over 700 individuals every Monday on my Subscription to Flowers program plus a full service floral business ...after working as a Title Officer and coordinating the Title Insurance for the Washington Square and St. Vincents Hospital projects explaining Real Property Law in Oregon to investors and contractors from Washington and California. I trained Attorneys to be Title Officers for nearly 14 years. I ran for State Representative when Senator Atiyeh was my mentor. I grew flowers commercially on part of our Federal Small Timber woodlot on Chehalem Mtn. that we logged 3 times and replanted.

After the Work Session I had hoped that this bill would die in committee because of all the problems with moving forward that were presented at that time. The KISS principal should apply here. Keep it SIMPLE and fix the I-5 bridge, other bridges and our infrastructure across this state.

1 – The legal entanglements of changing Oregon laws to enforce toll collection on the bridge were discussed for an hour in that work session. You will not be able to collect many tolls from Washington residents even after considerable more bills that you will have to waste time to write and pass because they don't want the bridge tolls in the first place.

2 – All of your transportation dollars will be tied up in this one project leaving roads across this state in worse shape over the next 30 years than they already are. Move Commerce and you improve the Economy and Create Jobs.

3 – Workers have testified at previous hearings that this bridge will create jobs. I live in Johns Landing by the Sellwood Bridge construction area and met two of the workers on that bridge at a local restaurant. They were from Texas. They wanted to know why everyone in Oregon was so hostile. Their families are in Texas and most of their money was going back to Texas. And they're not the only ones. So... do you want to create more hostility with Washington residents building a bridge that they have voted down and their Legislature has rejected? Do you want out of state workers on big projects? Or would it be wiser to repair and upgrade all our roads and hire more Oregonians in that process?

4 – Companies that you will have to compensate for relocating their businesses on the Columbia are demanding more money than was agreed upon. Those workers will be displaced. They will be driving further to work. Will they have jobs during the relocation? Will that damage the business potential of those businesses?

5 – By constructing a lower bridge to accommodate light rail in this design you will prevent other businesses from locating East of the river where jobs are much needed, where land is more available and where the location of those businesses will be further from the estuary.

6 – You had information from a Nationally recognized Forensic Accountant that would have cost you nothing but time. Her information is published on her web site. Washington Legislators looked at her information and then did their own homework, verifying the information and statistics she documented. She cannot render an OPINION for you. She can only present you with the facts as a professional. Tiffany Couch of Acuity Forensics is a resource that you could have used to become fully informed. Did you avail yourselves of that information? If you did, you would agree with the Washington State Legislature's decision to abandon this project and spend Oregon Taxpayer dollars more wisely. I submitted her bio and info at the work session.

7 – I don't have the details, but I understand that engineers even in ODOT know that the I-5 bridge is safe for many years to come. Even if that were not so, my years of experience tell me it would be wiser to spend less money on the bridge and upgrade it seismically ... and then upgrade all the Oregon infrastructure across this state to move commerce.

Finally, with the failed Light Rail system during the recent snow storm it would seem wise to abandon Light Rail on this bridge and improve our roads across the state, upgrade and repair our bridges and start planning for another bridge across the Columbia that would better serve Oregon and Washington and Commerce up and down the West Coast. Are you wise enough to do that? Kay Bridges 503-671-0218 4926 SW Corbett Ave #506, Portland, Oregon