

HB 4113 Testimony

My name is George Crandall. I live in Portland. I am an architect and urban designer. For the last 15 years, my firm Crandall Arambula, has been in the business of revitalizing cities throughout the United States and Canada.

In the early 1970's I was a project manager for the preparation of the Mount Hood Freeway EIS. For those of you who weren't around at that time, the project was an 8 lane freeway through Portland's east side, between Division St. and Clinton, connected to an expanded Marquam Bridge. In 1975 the project was terminated and some of the freeway funds were used to start Portland's Light Rail system.

In 2009 I became interested in the similarities between the CRC and Mount Hood Freeway project. Both were big freeway projects connected to Portland's freeway loop. I discovered that the CRC, like the Mt. Hood Freeway, could be characterized as 'A Fire Hydrant Connected to a Garden Hose'. In other words, the Portland freeway loop with its limited number of lanes is the garden hose, unable to accommodate additional CRC or Mt. Hood freeway lanes.

In 2010 I was invited to make a CRC presentation to the Portland Monthly/City Club Bright Lights series. My talk was titled "A Common Sense Alternative." You have heard or will hear more about that alternative today.

Since 2010 the CRC has been in the spotlight.

In 2011 The Bridge Review Panel determined that: The Bridge Design Was Wrong

In 2011 separate newspaper articles revealed that:

- Congestion was not relieved
- Job creation was 1/10th of CRC claims
- Traffic projections were inflated
- The financing plan was not realistic

In 2012 newspaper articles revealed that the bridge was not high enough.

In 2014 newspaper articles revealed that:

- The CRC would create gridlock on I-205
- The cost for seismically upgrading the existing bridges had been inflated by 300%

What I am getting at is that the CRC has not passed the most basic sniff test for integrity. It does not solve the problem – it creates huge new problems. The alarm signals are all flashing red! For Oregon and this legislature, the CRC has the potential to become what mayor Rob Ford is to Toronto – an embarrassment.

I urge you to not approve HB 4113 and suggest that you instruct the Governor to solve the problem with a more functional and cost effective solution.

You might also remind the Governor that the CRC, as designed, is in direct conflict with the recent pact he signed with West Coast leaders to combat climate change.



OREGONLIVE
The Oregonian

Smaller, cheaper CRC would serve just as well



The proposed Columbia River Crossing would replace the Interstate 5 bridge between Portland and Vancouver, Wash. (AP Photo/The Columbian, Jeremiah Coughlan)



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By George Crandall

The Oregonian's editorial "[Fix CRC tolling authority](#)" describes the Columbia River Crossing as a "large, heavy medicine ball" that will be headed straight for the Capitol when the Legislature reconvenes in February. A medicine ball is a curious metaphor but some do believe that the CRC is the medicine needed to cure any number of transportation and economic ills.

Unfortunately, the CRC has not survived the clinical trials. The Washington State Legislature has said no to the remedy. Clackamas County was not happy to learn that I-5 tolls would shift significant traffic to I-205, potentially causing gridlock on major roads. Clark County now believes that the toll co-pays would seriously reduce disposable incomes and create economic anemia.

In addition, the CRC prescription is considered by many respected organizations to be harmful to public health and to the environment. These organizations include the Coalition for a Livable Future, 1000 Friends of Oregon, Audubon Society of Portland, Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods, Northwest Environmental Defense Center, OPAL Environmental Justice Oregon, Oregon Chapter Sierra Club, Oregon Public Health Institute, Oregon Walks, and Upstream Public Health.

And finally, it has been revealed that the CRC is not a "cure" but a placebo. Paying \$3 billion plus for a 60-second reduction in travel time into Portland, plus limiting the size of barge shipments with a bridge that is too low is tantamount to the ancient practice of bleeding a patient who is seriously ill. It is clear that a different treatment is needed.

A highly functional and cost effective alternative has been suggested. A new I-5 vehicle-only bridge, with a lift span, could be constructed alongside the existing I-5 bridges to handle freeway traffic. The existing bridges could be retained for local traffic, bikes, pedestrians and future transit. This is a phased, pay-as-you-go solution, at one-third the cost of the CRC, which would not require tolling the new I-5 bridge.

Government and business have many reasons to support a slimmed down CRC. Clackamas County could support the project because tolls would not be shifting traffic to I-205. Washington state, burdened by other expensive transportation projects, would now see the project as affordable. Clark County could support the project if tolls disappeared and light rail transit was not part of the initial phase. Oregon could support the project, for the reduced cost would free up scarce funds for road maintenance and congestion-relieving projects. The environmental community and neighborhoods would support a slimmed down CRC and the reuse of existing bridges. Both actions would be consistent with Oregon's values.

Given current budget constraints, the federal government would be more than interested in a frugal solution that is also environmentally friendly. It is never too late to get government support for a project that would set the gold standard for an innovative use of scarce resources.

We can only hope that the Legislature will trim the "large, heavy medicine ball" down to size when it rolls into Salem.

Crandall is an architect with Portland-based Crandall Arambula.