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Dear Committee members,

I am contacting you as representative of southwest Washington residents who are contacting everyone involved in the new I-5 bridge with my comments on the plan to include light rail on the new I-5 bridge over the Columbia River.

Clark County residents have voted down light rail at least three times. The plan to add light rail to the I-5 bridge is to put a light rail train to nowhere into Clark County. We do not have the population density to justify the cost of light rail in Clark County. Maybe in 40-50 years we will. But not now. The majority of Washington residents do not support light rail in Clark County.

The plan is to have Washington residents pay for a light rail transit station somewhere in Vancouver to have light rail trains link into TriMet's Interstate Avenue light rail line (the yellow line) to commute into downtown Portland. As the name implies, light rail has a maximum weight capacity for each train. Your trains, which Washington residents will have to buy to use your rails, carry a maximum of about 350 passengers. About 70,000 Clark County commuters travel to Portland to work every day. The logistics for rush hour traffic of getting thousands of commuters off the freeway isn't possible with this light rail plan.

The problems with this totally nutty plan are numerous. Light rail is not cost effective, it is not efficient and it will not relieve the severe traffic congestion in the Portland-Vancouver metro area. That's for starters.

Yes, we need mass transit solutions. But forcing light rail on a population who opposes it is simply wrong. Most Clark County residents do not commute to Portland. We should not be forced to pay the exorbitant cost this plan entails. Light rail trains are glamour choo-choo trains that will not relieve rush - hour congestion. Adding insult to injury in ignoring the majority of the residents of Washington state, we have to pay for light rail for a train coming into Vancouver that goes nowhere, that forces up to pay for the same light rail system TriMet has, with no say about that, to connect to the slow-poke Interstate Avenue line that stops all the way into downtown Portland and that can only carry about 350 passengers on each train. We don't even get our own light rail line that shoots directly into downtown Portland from Vancouver. With 70,000 commuters a day from Vancouver to Portland how many cars do you think you are going to get off the freeways with this plan? Do you think Clark County residents are going to embrace this ridiculously slow light rail commute to downtown Portland? How do you think Portland residents are going to feel about about their at-capacity and very congested Interstate Avenue light rail line being overwhelmed by Clark County residents? This plan is just plain nuts.

Come on, people. Let's come up with solutions that have half a chance of helping our traffic woes. The I-205 bridge was built to accommodate light rail. If you insist on ignoring the will of Washington residents about light rail, at least put it in the I-205 bridge and connect into the much less congested and faster airport light rail line into downtown Portland. Truly, though, the only train transit system that will help is to look further out and consider the whole west coast I-5 transit corridor. Give us a bullet train from

Vancouver that shoots right into downtown Portland and that be a part of a future bullet train system up and down the very congested entire west coast I-5.

The very most effective and efficient mass transit plan you can put in place is to expand the bus system for commuters from Clark County. Electric, self-driving buses are coming. Make that the focus for mass transit with the new I-5 bridge at this time.

To address the congestion in the Portland-Vancouver metro area, two ideas: 1. Build a separate cargo system to get these non-stop trucks off of I-5 and out of the metro area. Look at a by-pass line along the interstate railroad bridge for trucks.

2. Better yet: build an I-5 bypass south of Portland that reconnects to I-5 north of Vancouver. This would have the biggest effect on relieving this non-stop traffic congestion in the Portland-Vancouver metro area. Yes, this would be expensive, but at least it would be effective. The federal government should fund the majority of an I-5 bypass. The Portland-Vancouver region is a small part of the I-5 traffic. We Oregon and Washington residents are unduly burdened by the pass-through and cargo traffic on I-5 that do not have Portland or Vancouver as their destination. That would be something that would make a difference and not anger an entire region of taxpayers.

Building a slow-poke choo-choo train connection to Portland's over-burdened Interstate Avenue line for Clark County residents is just plain foolish and disrespectful to the residents of southwest Washington and Interstate Avenue and downtown Portland.

Respectfully,

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