

Date: July 27, 2023

From: Robert Wallis, PE

To: Joint Legislative Committee on the IBR

---

I would appreciate you have the IBR project team correct an error they made during the initial screening of alternatives that led to the selection of the MLPA.

The IBRP team rejected the immersed tube tunnel option on the basis of an engineering assumption that had absolutely no merit – no underground ramps connecting surface streets to the tunnel. They assumed that underground ramps could not be connected to any of the underground portion of I-5, for a distance of over a mile. With that “No Underground Ramps”, assumption, the only way to connect back to streets near the river was with frontage roads from each end. With that bogus assumption, the tunnel option would not provide the connections to streets and highways near the river. That lack of connectivity was one of main reasons the tunnel option was rejected.

One may ask – how could they have made this bogus assumption? They did so because it was the assumption used in the CRC tunnel evaluation, which at the time was only for a bored tunnel. With a bored tunnel, the assumption is valid. With the immersed tube tunnel, it is not. For an immersed tube tunnel, the ramps down are no different than the ramps down to an underground parking garage.

In essence, they assumed you can ramp down from the high bridge to surface streets, but that you cannot ramp up from the tunnel to surface streets. With that assumption, the immersed tube tunnel option is absolutely not feasible. There is not an engineer in the world who would support that bogus assumption. That bogus assumption is clearly stated in an IBR memo but it was not prepared by an engineer.

In my mind, it is a fatal flaw in that it completely undermines the validity of the NEPA mandated alternative analysis that led to the selection of the MLPA.

At one point, I believed the IBRP team was deceiving the public. I now believe that this was a mistake made in haste to get the MLPA approved prior to last fall elections. I also believe it to be a fatal flaw in their entire decision-making process.