

**JOINT OREGON-WASHINGTON LEGISLATIVE
ACTION COMMITTEE
JUNE 10, 2024**

Bob Ortblad
Washington resident
Forty years a Professional Civil Engineer & CPA

Public Testimony:

The Office of Inspector General should investigate the Interstate Bridge Replacement Programs fraudulent “Tunnel Concept Assessment” used to gain a \$600 million federal grant. This report disqualified an immersed tunnel alternative to gain approval its Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) from eight cities and agencies.



U.S. Department
of Transportation
Office of Inspector General

Should investigate the Tunnel Concept Assessment


Tunnel Concept Assessment Revision 2
Prepared for:
 

COMMUNITY BENEFITS ADVISORY GROUP

APRIL 25, 2024

Bob Ortblad

Washington resident

Forty years a Professional Civil Engineer & CPA

Public Testimony:

<https://x.com/BOrtblad/status/1783622560489582631>

The IBR has a problem. Its Supplemental EIS has been delayed four times because federal agencies must have a serious problem with its Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA). The bridge is too low for the Coast Guard, too steep and dangerous, too large, ugly, and polluting.

Unfortunately, three years ago the IBR issued its “Tunnel Concept Assessment” that fraudulently disqualified a better solution. This report inflated excavation and dredging four times and over estimated costs. My Public Disclosure Request forced the IBR to cut its estimate in half from 8 million to a still inflated 4 million cubic yards. A reasonable estimate is only about 2 million cubic yards. Eight million cubic yards is a massive volume, the size of two-and-half Hoover Dams. But Greg Johnson has dismissed this as an oversight.

The IBR sent me an email pleading an idiot defense. They claimed they didn’t understand their software, they double

counted, they often make mistakes, they would have discovered the mistake in the future, and this massive mistake does not change their decision. A dozen professional engineers listed on this report did not check for reasonableness or a professional engineering stamp as require by ethics and State law. Consultants WSP and Parametrics never put their name on this report.

The IBR and their consultants are guilty of fraud or stupidity, in ether case they cannot be trusted to do a fair evaluation of an immersed tunnel. An independent evaluation of an immersed tunnel must be done and included in the Supplemental EIS.

COMMUNITY BENEFITS ADVISORY GROUP MAY 23, 2024

Bob Ortblad

Washington resident

Forty years a Professional Civil Engineer & CPA

Public Testimony:

<https://x.com/BOrtblad/status/1794091031606304814>

Last month I accused the IBR and its consultants of issuing a fraudulent and illegal tunnel evaluation report, and that the IBR claimed stupidity as a defense. I hope this committee has had time to check my facts.

The IBR used this report to disqualify a tunnel alternative and gain approval for its LPA from eight cities and agencies. *After these approvals*, a Public Disclosure Requests forced the IBR to issue two correcting Revisions. I doubt the IBR has ever notified the eight cities and agencies of these correcting Revisions. They never notified me, and I made the requests.

The IBR has not only defrauded local agencies, but it also as defrauded the Federal Department of Transportation of \$600 million and asking for a billion more. An honest tunnel evaluation by an independent engineering consultant must be done and included in the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement.

“Idiot Defense”

Email Sept. 8, 2023

Interstate Bridge Replacement Program Team

To: Bob Ortblad

Good afternoon,

Thank you for reaching out to the Interstate Bridge Replacement (IBR) program and for sharing your questions about the Cross Section areas. We are responding back to address your specific questions but want to be clear that this does not change that the tunnel still does not best address the needs of the I-5 bridge and the corridor.

Our team of engineers uses a variety of software tools, such as InRoads that you referenced. We have investigated your inquiry and were able to confirm an issue with the model. Duplication occurred in the model where some excavation quantities were counted more than once. We are working on making the correction in the report and uploading an updated version.

However, upon reviewing what you provided, it appears your representative diagram and excavation calculations at 87+00 do not account the construction need for laying back slopes during excavation (and the resulting surface property impacts), or the alternative to have temporary structural walls which come with an extremely high cost. As you know, one of these options must be accounted for to prevent the sides of the trench from caving in during construction of an ITT.

We conduct continuous quality checks and assurances to catch any errors that may arise with third party software and appreciate you flagging this. Quantity errors like this are not uncommon during the development of conceptual work. In a situation where plans are being constructed, the increasing level of detail completed as work advances would address potential calculation errors before moving to future steps.

As we have extensively detailed and documented, a tunnel still results in out-of-direction travel, cannot tie into existing connections, potentially causes safety concerns for active transportation, has significant environmental impacts, and has a higher estimated cost. While this error does result in a change in the quantity of excavation of material, it does not change the decision, reached with agency partners, not to pursue a tunnel as a solution for the I-5 corridor as the multiple factors considered remain true.

We appreciate your understanding.

Sincerely,

Interstate Bridge Replacement program

Tunnel Concept Assessment

Revision 2

Prepared by WSP USA and Parametrix Cost \$100,000

IBR's email explains their incompetence:

Translation:

"Our team of engineers uses a variety of software tools ... errors that may arise with third party software .."

We don't know how our software works.

"Duplication occurred in the model where some excavation quantities were counted more than once."

We only doubled 4 million cubic yards to 8 million cubic yards.

"Quantity errors like this are not uncommon during the development of conceptual work."

We make errors all the time, no big deal.

"In a situation where plans are being constructed, the increasing level of detail completed as work advances would address potential calculation errors before moving to future steps."

We would have found the error in the distance future.

"While this error does result in a change in the quantity of excavation of material, it does not change the decision, reached.."

We are just going to ignore our massive error.



Bob Ortblad
@Bortblad

Key events - Immersed Tunnel

July 14, 2021

IBR's error-filled "Tunnel Concept Assessment" challenged

Dec. 5, 2022

Hayden Island public challenge

Feb. 8, 2023

US Coast Guard suggests tunnel evaluation

@USCGPacificNW

Sept. 8, 2023

IBR pleads "Idiot Defense" to avoid fraud



Commander
Thirteenth Coast Guard District

February 8, 2023

08 February 2023

"Including only one alternative in the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) introduces **risk that no permissible alternative** will be evaluated in the SEIS. It is my sincere hope that the SEIS will include evaluation of an alternative that meets the preliminary navigation clearance determination (PNCD) requirement of **178 feet**."

M. W BOUBOULIS
Rear Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard
Thirteenth Coast Guard District

17 June 2022

"Any proposed new bridge should have a vertical navigation clearance (VNC) of greater than or equal to that of the existing I-5 twin bridges of **178 feet** or preferable, unlimited VNC, as well as a horizontal navigation clearance (HNC) as permitted during the final USACE 408 permit. There are alternative options to accomplish this VNC to **include a tunnel** or a high-level lift bridge or bascule bridge, which would provide an unlimited vertical clearance."

B. J. HARRIS
Chief, Waterways Management Branch
Coast Guard District Thirteen By direction of the District Commander
U.S. Coast Guard

From: Interstate Bridge Replacement Program Team <ipbr@coastguard.mil>
Subject: Interstate Bridge Replacement Program Conceptual Report
Date: Wednesday, 2/8/23 at 12:19 PM
To: ipbr@coastguard.mil

Good afternoon,

Thank you for reaching out to the Interstate Bridge Replacement (IBR) program and for sharing your questions about the Canal Section areas. We are responding back to address your specific questions but want to be clear that you do not change that the tunnel still does not best address the needs of the I-5 bridge and the corridor.

Our team of engineers uses a variety of software tools, such as iRoads that you referenced. We have investigated your inquiry and were able to confirm **an issue** with the model. Duplication occurred in the model where some excavation quantities were counted more than once. We are working on making the correction in the report and updating an updated version.

However, upon reworking what you provided, it appears your representative diagram and excavation calculations at 67400 do not account the construction need for laying back slopes during excavation (and the resulting surface property impacts), or the alternative to have temporary structural walls which come with an extremely high cost. As you know, one of these options must be accounted for to prevent the sides of the trench from caving in during construction of an IIT.

We conduct continuous quality checks and assurances to catch any errors that may arise with third party software and appreciate you flagging this. Despite errors like this, we are not **undoing** during the development of conceptual work. In a situation where plans are being constructed, the increasing level of detail completed as work advances would address potential calculation errors before moving to future steps.

As we have extensively detailed and documented, a tunnel still results in out-of-control level, cannot be into existing connectors, potentially causes safety concerns for active transportation, has significant environmental impacts, and has a higher estimated cost. While the error does result in a change in the quantity of excavation of material, it does not change the decision, reached with agency partners, not to pursue a tunnel as a solution for the I-5 corridor as the multiple factors considered remain true.

We appreciate your understanding.

Sincerely,

Interstate Bridge Replacement program
Communications Team

September 8, 2023

IBR pleads the
"Idiot Defense"
to avoid fraud

Inflated cubic-yards of excavation

IBR original 8 million 400%

IBR revision 4 million

Correct about 2 million 100%



200 attendees
Largest IBR meeting

December 5, 2022

IBR Program Administrator, Greg Johnson defended fraudulent report and attacked critic at Hayden Island public meeting.

<https://x.com/BOrtblad/status/1678844199784030212>



Bob Ortblad @BOrtblad · Jul 11, 2023



At the Hayden Island Community meeting with 200 attendees IBR Administrator, Greg Johnson, questioned my license & qualifications to criticize the IBR's Bridge.

Professional Engineer No. 14642 Feb 1, 1974

Certified Public Accountant No. 5242 Nov 18, 1977

Retired 40yrs exp.



11

16

40

8.6K



IBR, WSDOT, and ODOT have hundreds of engineers and for two years they ignored my warning. No body checked IBR's "Tunnel Concept Assessment" fraudulent estimates. My Public Disclosure Request forced a 50% reduction in cubic yards of excavation and dredging. A 75% reduction would be more accurate.

<https://x.com/BOrtblad/status/1709977554566975554>



Bob Ortblad @BOrtblad · Oct 5, 2023



IBR, WSDOT, & ODOT was warned of wildly inflated excavation estimate but for 2 yrs but did not check "Tunnel Concept Assessment" reasonableness.

Used to disqualify an immersed tunnel alternative.

IBR has admitted an excavation error of 4 million cubic yards, probably much larger.



↻ 3

♥ 9

📊 1.4K



<https://x.com/BOrtblad/status/1641484667286339585>



Bob Ortblad
@BOrtblad



Citizens, engineers, and contractors from both Hayden Island and Vancouver support an Immersed Tunnel.

Suggested viewing:

ASCE “Exploring an Immersed Tunnel Solution”

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=wWvkRV3alkM&t=2472s...>

Hayden Island Neighborhood Network (200 attendees)

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=zRXJqqNEZMY&t=5s...>

@VancouverUS



9:56 AM · Mar 30, 2023 · 2,217 Views