

Dear Co-Chairs McLain and Frederick, Co-Vice-Chairs Boshart Davis and Boquist, and committee members,

The facts are clear, the I-5 bridge is aging and needs to be replaced to ensure I-5 will have a safe and viable crossing between Portland and Vancouver even after an inevitable future earthquake. I support replacing the aging I-5 bridge. In that support I advocate creating a Right Size crossing to replace it, which would fiscally be supported by the financial outlines of the -3 amendment which I endorse. I oppose the -2 and -4 Amendment of this bill simply because replacing this bridge does not require a blank check connected to Oregon's general fund. Other priorities in Oregon need to be protected and funded from that general fund.

The NW and entire West Coast deserves to have an I-5 crossing between Portland and Vancouver that does not have a stoplight. And local workers deserve the jobs that will be created by a project to replace the old bridge.

When your committee thinks about authorizing money to replace the I-5 bridge please consider this:

- Seattle just spent BILLIONS to TEAR DOWN a tall, noisy, giant shadow casting highway structure, The Alaskan Way Viaduct, and replace it with a tunnel – Why are we going backwards in time and considering spending \$7.5 Billion on a similar structure now, which future generations will want to tear down? When the viaduct was built in 1949 it was considered “progress” but today this type of build is no longer cutting edge. Seattle's waterfront became brighter, quieter, and more attractive to tourists and locals alike. Property values went up when that structure came down.
- An Immersed Tube Tunnel would cost \$1-2 Billion less than the IBRP's “LPA” bridge design.
- The U.S. Coast Guard has said NO to the IBRP's LPA (with its 116ft. marine vehicle navigable clearance) fixed span bridge design. While *the Coast Guard has suggested a tunnel* (or bascule bridge) option be considered, so an unlimited NVC could be achieved.
- If this Coast Guard NO keeps the IBRP from getting a permit, just adding on a lift span to the LPA design will create an unnecessary rebuild of 5 interchanges because a lower lift span bridge design (and a Immersed Tube Tunnel) would not require the 7 interchanges to need rebuilding, as it would fit into most of the existing infrastructure

IBR spent \$100,000 on 17 engineers & consultants that created a “report” that rejected a tunnel option.

Unfortunately, The tunnel-bridge comparison evaluation was not credible because of an engineering error in the conceptual design of the tunnel option. That error led to the conclusion that the tunnel would be about “50 to 100 feet deep” at the portals at each end of the bridge (portals are the tunnel entrance points). The report does not mention which end (Vancouver or Hayden Island) of the tunnel was the deepest, but conceptual drawings included in the report suggest a 100-foot deep portal at the

Vancouver end. That depth is extremely over-stated. At both ends, the portal depth would be less than 35 feet. By exaggerating the depth, the freeway connections to Downtown Vancouver become impossible. In short, an engineering error caused the tunnel option to be rejected. Without the error, the tunnel may have been selected as the preferred option.

I will submit two engineering reports that will illuminate the previous error and the viability of a tunnel in detail.

The tunnel was reviewed with nine IBR staff and five others that were employees from WSP, which is the firm Johnson was employed. And the IBRP has “The IBR program is leveraging work from previous planning efforts” and a staff member said to me they are assuming the Coast Guard will change its mind because they approved the old CRC project.

This bet is too pricey for our region, when *the Coast Guard has clearly said no* with very clear reasons why. And let me take a moment to recap some of those here:

- If an aircraft ditches in the Columbia River, heavy lift cranes and barges would need to transit the Columbia River east of the I-5 twin bridges as part of the recovery process necessitating a VNC greater than 116 feet. Lemon Island is a pre-determined emergency ditch site for aircraft using the PDX. THIS WILL NOT CHANGE.
- As global power dynamics shift keep in mind that during a protracted conflict the waterway east of the existing I-5 twin bridges historically was used to build naval ships, WWII Kaiser Shipyard, now known as Columbia River Business Center (CBC), and could support ship building once again with little improvement. *National security is a vital consideration we cannot ignore.*
- "...the proposed bridge would prevent other Department of Defense assets including salvage and diving from mooring upstream (east) of the I-5 twin bridges during a natural disaster response..."

That list from U.S. Coast Guard communications did not include the recent history of a sunken ship near the I-5 bridge that needed a 136 crane on a barge to haul it up off the river floor to ensure river navigation safety. That crane was shipped from the Seattle area, down the west coast, and up the Columbia. Such a crane would not be able to get past the IBRP's LPA 116ft fixed span bridge design.

Please look to Europe, Asia, and many other areas in the world that are building more and more tunnels rather than bridges. One example is Maryland that realized an 8-lane double-deck bridge would have had a negative environmental and aesthetic impact on the nearby National Monument and Historic Site at Fort McHenry, so they built an immersed tunnel to protect historic Fort McHenry. Our areas own Fort Vancouver deserves similar protection.

Fort McHenry Tunnel Quick Facts:

- Construction time was less than 5 years for a project
- Construction of the Fort McHenry Tunnel required the precise coordination of 11 prime contracts. (Lots of JOBS!)
- Cost was \$750 million (construction from '80-'85) and came in under budget with no major delays despite the challenges of building an 8 lane tunnel
- Traffic Volume: 45.4 million vehicles (both directions)
- Crosses under the Patapsco River and is a 1.5-mile tunnel
  - (3 x longer than one needed to replace the I-5 bridge)

The IBRP has a budget of millions to do outreach, selling this design to people in the area, including you legislators on this committee. A legitimate independent study on an Immersed Tube Tunnel would only run around \$1M, which is a fraction of the cost of that IBRP outreach budget.

A tunnel:

- Will Save \$1-2B that can go towards other vital budget needs in both Oregon and Washington
- Is the SAFER option in the event of an earthquake (San Francisco's Bay Area Rapid Transit – BART, just kept running after the last earthquake, with only downtime to check the tunnel and make sure no damage was done. At the same time some on/off ramps were damaged and thus closed for repairs after the earthquake, plus some bridges had structural damage as well.)
- Will allow Downtown Vancouver to connect with Fort Vancouver via a new open green space created when part of I-5 goes underground!
- Will open more greenspace on Hayden Island as well
- Increase property values around the entrances to the tunnel
- Will alleviate the noise pollution caused by bridges
- Will improve the views from Portland and Vancouver
- Result in NO stoplight on I-5 traffic when ships need to pass over it, causing traffic delays

- Will create many good local jobs and be constructed locally
- Is cheaper to build because
  - It would NOT require 7 interchanges to be rebuilt on either side of the Columbian River
  - Only the Vancouver waterfront interchanges and Hayden Island's would need to be altered
  - The Oregon Slough Bridge could remain in place and not need to be replaced
  - Avoids our tax \$\$ from being wasted in a Supreme Court case to replace almost 30 floating homes "in kind" (The IBRP's LPA design will take away nearly 30 floating home slips. These homes can easily be physically moved but have no where to go due to the floating home slip cap in place.)

It really comes down to this, what do you want to see? More tent space for houseless people under those 7 rebuilt interchanges and the massively high (& 3 times as wide as current bridge) bridge structure, or do you want to improve the lives of many by creating jobs, open river front spaces with less noise and an amazing view?



Thank you for your time considering these points.

Sincerely, Rev. Rebecca Friend