



OFFICES OF THE GOVERNORS

CHRISTINE O. GREGOIRE
WASHINGTON

THEODORE R. KULONGOSKI
OREGON

June 19, 2008

Columbia River Crossing Task Force
700 Washington Street, Suite 300
Vancouver, WA 98660

Dear Director Garrett, Secretary Hammond and Task Force Co-Chairs Hewitt and Dengerink:

First of all, we would like to offer both Hal and Henry our sincere appreciation for the countless hours they have spent leading the Columbia River Crossing Task Force over the past three years. Their leadership has helped increase awareness of the significance of this crossing not only to local neighborhoods and communities, but regionally, and nationally. We feel very strongly that now is the time to address this key bottleneck that not only links Portland and Vancouver but affects the economic vitality of the entire west coast.

The Task Force has continued a tradition of transparency and local government and citizen involvement in the CRC project, spanning many years of bi-state planning. In addition to their own visions and values each of the thirty-nine Task Force members brought to the table, you have received input from local, regional, state and federal agencies, as well as thousands of hours of community input from Oregon and Washington citizens. There is no other project in the Portland-Vancouver region that has engaged the public to the extent this project has.

The decision the Task Force is poised to reach at their final June 24th meeting will set a solid foundation for this project to move forward in a way that is consistent with local values voiced by citizens and governments on both sides of the river. The Task Force's decision will guide the state departments of transportation as the project moves forward into the design phase.

We are pleased that the U.S. Department of Transportation recognizes this project as one of a handful of projects of national significance in the country. Most recently, this was demonstrated by its designation as a Corridor of the Future and the award of federal funds for the next phase of project development.

Our strong support for this project is centered on the belief that it presents a huge opportunity for our two states. It is an opportunity to leverage federal funds to build a project that provides transportation options, improves safety, enhances freight mobility, and demonstrates to the nation how to build a green project that reflects the values of our region.

We firmly believe this can and should be the one of the most sustainable transportation projects in the country; one that incorporates high capacity transit, strategies that reduce vehicle miles traveled, tolling, electronic safety technologies, and world class bike and pedestrian facilities. We also believe we must use construction materials and methods that would minimize environmental impacts.

As you know, there are a number of advisory working groups that have had significant influence on the direction of the project, including groups dealing with aesthetics, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, freight movement, and community and environmental justice issues. We believe that it is important for these working groups to continue to meet and provide input to the project. However, simply extending the life of these working groups does not provide adequate involvement from the many sponsor agencies, as well as the diverse stakeholders that have been effectively engaged throughout the three year life of the Task Force.

To that end we are in the process of reconvening the Project Sponsor's Council to allow for high level formalized input to the Departments of Transportation. This council will continue to meet after the task force has convened their final meeting and provided direction on a locally preferred alternative (LPA). This Council will ensure that a structure is in place to provide guidance to the project as it transitions from planning to design and construction.

The Council will be made up of top level representatives from the Washington State Department of Transportation, the Oregon Department of Transportation, cities of Portland and Vancouver, Metro, SW Washington's Regional Transportation Commission, TriMet, and C-Tran.

Members will be appointed by the Governors of Oregon and Washington and the Council will be chaired by two citizens, one from each state, not directly associated with any participating agency.

The Council will be charged with advising the two departments of transportation and transit agencies on:

1. Completion of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS),
2. Project design, including but not limited to: examining ways to provide an efficient solution that meets safety, transportation and environmental goals,
3. Timelines associated with project development,
4. Development and use of sustainable construction methods,

5. Ensuring the project is consistent with Oregon and Washington's statutory reduction goals for green house gas emissions, and
6. A finance plan that balances revenue generation and demand management.

Recommendations will be made, to the greatest extent possible, based on a consensus of the Council.

We look forward to supporting the States of Oregon and Washington in their efforts to build a bridge that can serve as a model for the nation.

Sincerely,



CHRISTINE O. GREGOIRE
Governor of Washington



THEODORE R. KULONGOSKI
Governor of Oregon