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March 6, 2013

Nancy Fenno Boyd, P.E., L.E.G.
Director, Columbia River Crossing
700 Washington Street, Suite 300
Vancouver, WA 98660

Dear Ms. Boyd,

I am writing to obtain information on proposed expenditures within the Columbia River Crossing I-5 project. Outside sources have investigated the financial documents for this project, which have raised some interesting questions and expenditures that need to be explained. I hope you can provide me with some clarity regarding the purpose and relevance to the underlying project of the following:

- \$51 million for a TriMet Maintenance facility in Gresham Oregon -- located approximately 10 miles east of the CRC project.
- \$2.7 million for an administrative facility for Oregon's Mass Transit organization, TriMet, in South Portland.
- \$10 million for a "Curation Facility." The best explanation my office has found for this expenditure is that it refers to the construction of and/or improvements to a museum. I would appreciate your clarification.
- \$15 million for a restoration project at the Lewis River -- located approximately 22 miles north of the project.
- \$343,936 for upgrades to Portland's Steel Bridge. This bridge is located 6 miles south of the project.
- \$6.9 million for Hood River Channel Restoration, located 60 miles east of the project.
- The CRC's prime contractor was granted a \$50 Million "Maximum Amount Payable" contract to perform the environmental impact studies for this project. Through June 2012, that contract stood at \$131.2 Million.

- According to the CRC, the actual cost of building the bridge structure is \$790 million in post escalation dollars. In that same scale, the CRC budget shows that Oregon interchanges will cost \$800 Million. The CRC's finance plan calls for the cost of the bridge to be paid for by tolls, and includes the Oregon interchange price tag in that cost. If the current proposal were to move forward, Southwest Washington commuters would pay a lion's share of the tolls, meaning that Southwest Washington taxpayers would also be paying for a large share of Oregon interchange improvements.
- The projected per mile costs for the CRC light rail portion of the project are unprecedented. For a 2.9 mile expansion of Portland's light rail system, the CRC is estimating a cost of \$850 million -- or \$293 million per mile. The projected cost per mile is significantly higher than that of recent light rail projects in both Seattle (\$179 million per mile) and the latest Portland line (\$204 million per mile). Both projects had the distinction of being the most expensive in the nation as they required extensive tunneling in poor soil conditions, elevated sections, stations as deep as 180 feet and, in the case of the Portland line, a dedicated light rail bridge across the Willamette River. Excluding these projects, the average per mile costs of Light Rail across the nation are about \$35 million per mile. What makes the CRC's light rail costs so much higher?
- In a recently released report, serious questions have been raised pertaining to several subcontractor relationships by the CRC. Details have been provided which speak to a troubling pattern of former employees of CRC contractors leaving their employment to return as subcontractors at substantially higher rates of income. Are these subcontractors performing work duties that are similar to the work they provided as employees? How did these increased expenditures help the project achieve strategic objectives? Have state and federal employment regulations been adhered to? What steps are being taken to protect our taxpayers who must foot the bill for these substantially higher costs?

Since I've been asked by some within the community to support this project in Congress, it is important to me that I have an understanding of its full scope. It is also important to me that every taxpayer dollar is used wisely, and I hope you can ease my mind in that regard.

Sincerely,


Jaime Herrera Beutler
Member of Congress