



## **PRESS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release

30 May 2008

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Mara Gross, Coalition for a Livable Future, 503 294 2889

### **Federal Government Denies Request for More Time to Comment on Columbia River Crossing**

(Portland, OR) On May 29, the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration denied a request by thirteen organizations to extend the time to comment on the plan to replace and expand the I-5 bridge over the Columbia River.

The groups had submitted a detailed five page request that set out multiple reasons for why more time was needed to analyze the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The denial letter stated that the groups had failed to show “good cause” for the request, but did not respond to any of the points in the request letter.

The organizations had requested 60 additional days to comment on the plan, citing deficiencies in compliance with the federal process, as well as the potential for environmental harm, size of the proposed action, large number of people affected by the project, and high degree of controversy.

The CRC comment period is 60 days, compared to 90 days allowed for the proposed Warm Springs Casino in the Columbia River Gorge. At \$4.2 billion, the project is more than ten times the size of the \$389 million Gorge Casino project, with a comment period that is a third shorter.



Mara Gross, Policy Director at the Coalition for a Livable Future, expressed concern that 60 days is not enough time to review and comment on a 5,000 page analysis. She also expressed concern at the government's failure to respond to any of group's concerns, stating: "I hope this is not indicative of how they intend to respond to the public's comments on the DEIS."

Although the response letter referenced other opportunities for public input, Tom Buchele, who submitted the extension request, noted that the DEIS public comment period is "the only time where the government must respond in writing to the public's comments. The public comment period is a vital part of the public process. The public is getting short-changed."

The response was sent to Tom Buchele, Managing Attorney & Clinical Professor at the Pacific Environmental Advocacy Center (PEAC) at Lewis and Clark Law School. Buchele submitted the request letter on behalf of the groups, which include 1000 Friends of Oregon, the Bicycle Transportation Alliance, Coalition for a Livable Future, Community Health Partnership, and the Oregon League of Conservation Voters.

Attachments: USDOT Comment Extension Response  
CRC Extension Letter

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