



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

23 May 2008

Contacts: Tom Buchele, Pacific Environmental Law Center (PEAC) at Lewis & Clark Law School, 503 768 6738
Mara Gross, Coalition for a Livable Future, 503-294-2889

Thirteen Organizations Request More Time to Comment on Columbia River Crossing

(Portland, OR) On May 21, 2008, thirteen organizations requested 60 additional days to comment on the plan to replace and expand the I-5 bridge over the Columbia River.

The organizations made the request because the public needs more time to determine whether the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) adequately addresses the diversity of environmental issues implicated by a project of this magnitude. Meaningful public participation is central to the process, which is governed by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

In requesting the extension, the groups cite the potential for environmental harm, size of the proposed action, large number of people affected by the project, and high degree of controversy. The groups also cite deficiencies in the CRC's compliance with the NEPA process. The public does not currently have all necessary documents, and cannot provide meaningful comments without comprehensive information.

Tom Buchele, Managing Attorney & Clinical Professor at the Pacific Environmental Advocacy Center (PEAC) at Lewis and Clark Law School, described the DEIS as "a highly technical, 5,000 page document." He stated, "Concerned citizens cannot adequately participate if they are only given 60 days to comment."



Jeri Sundvall-Williams, environmental justice activist and Task Force member stated:

"This is a huge project running right through North and Northeast Portland, where significant numbers of low-income and people of color communities and Elders live. These communities have high rates of asthma and other health impacts from I-5. We need to ensure that the project does not disparately impact these communities and that there is an equitable distribution of benefits."

The Pacific Environmental Advocacy Center (PEAC) at Lewis and Clark Law School submitted the 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. The request was sent to the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, and the CRC's Co-Directors and Environmental Manager.

Attachment: CRC Extension Letter

###