



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Federal Transit Administration
Region 10
915 Second Avenue, Room 3142
Seattle, Washington 98174-1002
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May 28, 2008
IN REPLY REFER TO
HPP S001(250)

Tom Buchele
Managing Attorney and Clinical Professor
Pacific Environmental Advocacy Center (PEAC) at Lewis and Clark Law School
10015 SW Terwilliger Blvd.
Portland, OR 97219

RE: I-5 Columbia River Crossing
Request for 60-day DEIS Comment Period Extension

Dear Mr. Buchele,

Thank you for submitting your request for a 60-day extension to the Columbia River Crossing Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) comment period. After careful consideration, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) respectfully decline the request to extend the current 60-day comment period.

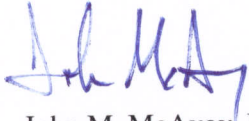
As mentioned in your request, the comment period for a DEIS shall be no less than 45 days. Prior to issuing the CRC Draft EIS, FTA, FHWA and the other project Co-Leads (Washington State Department of Transportation, Oregon Department of Transportation, Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council, Metro, TriMet and C-TRAN) decided to extend this to 60 days in order to allow additional time for review and comment. Section 6002 (g)(2)(A) of SAFETEA-LU (Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users), the federal transportation reauthorization bill, established a comment period of "no more than 60 days" for Draft Environmental Impact Statements. FTA and FHWA do not see "good cause" (Section 6002 (g)(2)(A)(ii) for extending the current comment period beyond the 60 days that are already being provided.

The DEIS comment period is only one opportunity during the NEPA process for the public, agencies and tribes to review information and provide input. Over the past three years, the project has provided opportunities for stakeholders to comment on numerous components of the draft including the Purpose and Need, Range of Alternatives, methodologies for analyzing impacts to various elements of the environment and preliminary findings. Project staff has also participated in over 450 meetings with neighborhood groups, business organizations, and other potentially affected stakeholders, including a number of the organizations that you have noted in your letter.

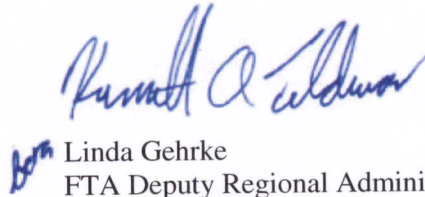
If you are interested, project staff will meet with representatives from the various organizations that you represent in order to answer questions and facilitate their timely review of the DEIS. Please contact Heather Gundersen, CRC Environmental Manager, at 360-816-2199 or gundersenh@columbiarivercrossing.org to schedule time with project staff to discuss comments on the DEIS. We look forward to receiving your comments.

Feel free to contact either of us if you have questions about this correspondence.

Sincerely,



John M. McAvoy, PE
FHWA Major Projects Manager
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Vancouver, WA 98661
(360) 619-7591



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FTA Deputy Regional Administrator
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(206) 220-4463

Cc: Heather Gundersen, CRC (DOT)
Alan Lehto, TriMet
Scott Patterson, C-TRAN
Ross Robert, Metro
Bob Hart, RTC

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