

**COLUMBIA CORRIDOR**  
A S S O C I A T I O N

11 May 2007

Mr. J. Richard Capka  
Administrator  
Federal Highway Administration  
400 Seventh Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20590

Re: *I-5 Columbia River Crossing* Application for Interstate Maintenance Discretionary Program Funds

Dear Administrator Capka:

I am writing to express Columbia Corridor Association's strong support for the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) application for Interstate Maintenance Discretionary program funds for the Columbia River Crossing. ODOT has applied for \$6 million for this vital regional transportation project.

Freight mobility is critical to the economic health of the Portland-Vancouver region, as it is a larger freight center than its population size would indicate. For example, one in five jobs in Oregon is linked to international trade. 120,000 jobs or 10 percent of the jobs in the Portland-Vancouver region are involved in trade and transportation.

The Columbia Corridor is home to 2500 diverse companies, employing 60,000 people. It stands at the intersection of Class 1 railroads, interstate highways, an international seaport and international airport. Freight transportation is the primary economic driver of the Corridor. The Columbia Corridor Association is a member of the Portland Freight Advisory Committee and the Columbia River Crossing Freight Working Group.

The current I-5 bridges across the Columbia River and adjacent interchanges are a serious bottleneck impeding the flow of freight. The bridges have inadequate capacity and are considered unsafe for travel at interstate speeds.

Oregon and Washington have jointly launched the Columbia River Crossing project to develop and construct multi-modal solutions to these transportation challenges, and they are moving ahead with a draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) that will identify the preferred solution in 2008. Funding from the Interstate Maintenance Discretionary program would help the two states complete the EIS and begin bridge design.

As perhaps the only bi-state, multi-modal megaproject underway in the country, the Columbia River Crossing is a very complex project and will require strong support from all levels of government, including the U.S. Department of Transportation, to bring it to completion. I urge the U.S. Department of Transportation to provide the funding and other support necessary to help advance this critical project. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Corky Collier  
Executive Director