

Fischer, Steven M CIV USCG D13 (USA)

From: Shannasset <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Sunday, January 11, 2026 10:47 PM
To: D13-SMB-D13-BRIDGES
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] USCG Citizen comment on the I-5 bridge lift height 2 of 3
Attachments: #22 ASenator Benton's letter.pdf; #22 B RTC letter TBN not studied-2.pdf; #22 E TBN not studied.pdf; Not studies email Steve Stuart-1.pdf; #22.A A not studied Blumenauer.pdf

USCG

Commander

Coast Guard District Northwest

915 Second Avenue, Room 3510

Seattle, WA 98174-1067

Email: d13-smb-d13-bridges@uscg.mil

Citizen Comment January 10, 2026

The Columbia River Crossing bridge height issues if a new bridge is constructed.

Now Is Not The Time To Lessen Our Current And Future Opportunities

On The Mighty Columbia River

I would like to thank the US Coast Guard for your effort to provide a thorough permitting process. The Columbia River as you are aware has extremely diverse amount marine vessels using the waterways. The Columbia and the Mississippi Rivers are the only two rivers to go into the interior of the United States. The Columbia River has several working ports along the Oregon and Washington sides of the river with plans for extensive future growth.

I am asking that you continue to focus on keeping bridges from being an obstruction to current and future marine traffic on the Columbia River. In the past and currently we have had to use the entire height of the lift for larger vessels, historical sailing ships, recreational boats, Army Corps Engineers, dredging, large windmill parts, and other commercial products. It is vital that we keep our options

open and our bridges able to continue to handle the current and future marine time needs while adding new infrastructure.

The immense pressure applied to marine companies in our area to allow extreme limitations to be placed on bridge lift heights, a right that is not theirs to give away is unacceptable. The pressure to give up current business needs and future bridge lift heights includes 10's of millions of dollar to different businesses. Why pay out millions in dollars? It's for damages from placing a new obstruction, a bridge too low to accommodate current and future river traffic. The companies would not be receiving millions of dollars in damage unless damages were accruing from the new limiting shipping height. There has been absolutely no reason or justification given why we would construct a bridge that would lower the height when a lift would remove any possible obstructions. Bridges have lifts it's common. A lift will continue to support current and future maritime needs for commerce and homeland security.

The Wilson Bridge on I-95 constructed in 2010 is a new lift bridge. The Wilson Bridge size is twelve-lane freeway, plus auxiliary and emergency lanes. The Wilson Bridge carries 200,000 vehicles daily and has about the same amount of lifts as the Columbia River does now. The Columbia River replacement bridge will be 8 to 10-lanes and carries 135,000 vehicles daily. Adding a second lift in BNSF Rail Bridge would drop bridge lifts by 95% extremely less than the Wilson Bridge current lifts. The Wilson Bridge has approximately 200 lift a year the I-5 bridges have about 250 lifts a year. With the addition of a second lift on the BNSF rail bridge lifts are reduced to approximately 25 lifts in a year. If the FHWA would like less lifts then they needs to step up and pay for a second lift and its maintenance concerning the BNSF rail bridge. Truman Hobbs hearing clearly stated the majority of the benefits went to freeway users when the "humps" went in creating the barge channel lessening lifts on the I-5 freeway bridges. The humps also created the "S curve" navigational issues when the lift was not lined up with the new barge channels. The hearings stated that with benefit being majority for the freeway the maritime funding could not be used to remove one of the nations top ten water safety hazards. The FHWA has known from the I-5 Corridor Study of 1999 recommended at that time to "fix" the BNSF rail line for the 95% lifts. If it was really important to FHWA to have less lifts they could have done it 25 years ago when the Environmental Impact Statement recommended or in during the Truman Hobbs hearing when it became known the funding would need to come for FHWA. The Portland / Vancouver Transportation and Trade Partnership study of 2002 also recommended that the BNSF rail bridge be addressed to lessen lift and for marine safety. Please inform the FHWA that if they want fewer lifts on the I-5 freeway or a replacement bridge they can get what is wanted right now. By addressing the BNSF rail bridge. The USCG keeps what is needed a lift bridge providing access to and from the Pacific Ocean from the interior of the nation. If we need to replace the I-5 bridges for structural reasons we have a new bridge for safety and a lift for the USCG and water users. Win, Win for common sense and a river that rises.

The necessity of keeping free from adding more maritime water hazardous and obstructions where we currently have one. Creating even more stress on the "S curve" maneuver by no longer having an aligned lift system. With the 1903 lift being on the northern shoreline and the "new high span" in the center of the Columbia River our lifts are no longer aligned an added another safety issue. There has been no reason given on why if the Columbia River Crossing bridges commonly known as the I-5 bridges needs to be replacement, or that the replacement bridge should not be a lift. A new lift if a new bridge is necessary is perfect. We are a port town and a port region and must keep our future option open.

The bridge lifts are not the only reason traffic stops on the bridges accidents and congestion is the majority reason. The most reason data showed the congestion would not be lessened by the replacement bridge so if it is okay for traffic to slow or stop because of land vehicles then it is even more reasonable to for marine commerce. Marine traffic have very few choice as to the path they must take, unlike land vehicle which can make several more “road” options to create different bridge locations and alignments.

Second Point

For historical bridges requiring Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act compliance is important. Oregon's Parks and Recreation Department communication from Tim Wood State Historic Preservation Officer on March 6, 2007.

“ I am writing to express our concerns about the Columbia River Crossing (CRC) staff recommendations considered by the CRC Task Force on February 27, 2007.”

“The recommendations do not appear to adequately address the cultural resource review process. The northbound bridge appears to be eligible for National Register designation. Yet there are no alternatives in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) that explore the re-use of either bridge for future use.”

“if a legitimate exploration of the re-use options does not take place and the reasons against re-using the bridges are not justified, then the entire project could be exposed to criticisms and procedural challenges in the future.”

“Our comments are offered with the intent of ensuring CRC’s compliance with the cultural resources regulations as well as the spirit of preservation to these historic bridges, if possible. We look forward to a continued dialogue on the issue, and assisting with an improved crossing over the Columbia River.”

4(f) Historical Resources of Significance require if it is Feasible or Prudent to avoid protected national historical resources. The bridges and several other properties have National Register designation. It is Feasible to build a new bridge adjacent to the BNSF rail bridge called the “port-to-connection” and has been in adopted regional plans for decades. It is Prudent to construct a bridge in a different location because the I-5 freeway south of the bridge through Portland has been deemed failed and over capacity since the 1980's by FHWA when metered ramps they had to be added to remove gridlock. We have fewer bridge crossings than similar sized metropolitans do in the United States. We need more bridges and new corridors leading up to them. *Addressing the BNSF rail bridge lift would significantly lessen lifts on the historically protected bridges possibly extending their life.

As stated by the Oregon State Historic Preservation Officer Tim Wood alternatives that keep or reuse the bridges must be in the DEIS. Letters from US Congress Members, Oregon and Washington Legislators, local elected officials, the Clark County Board of Commissioners, CRC Project Sponsor Council members, Ctran, and SW WA Regional Transportation Council also state alternative were not studied or vetted (looked at). These letters state staff was not following the NEPA Process.

This video link shows when the CRC staff removed projects out of the CRC process not following the NEPA Process. The CRC Task Force was an advisory only committee not oversight and not a Signatory Agencies. Alternative brought in during NEPA Scoping Process must be Thoroughly (there is a list) studied through construction and operation for impacts and benefits to the community and environment. RC-14 and other alternatives that re-use the current historic bridge were removed in violation of the NEPA Process requirements.

Letters attached

Third Point

The I-5 Corridor Study 1999 stated we had fewer bridges than similar sized metropolitan with congestion was causing economic damage, and to fix the BNSF rail bridge line.

In 2002 I-5 Portland / Vancouver Transportation and Trade Partnership study stated to add additional multi-modal capacity including heavy rail across the Columbia River with a Supplemental or if necessary a replacement bridge and fix the BNSF rail bridge issues.

In 2005 the I-5 bridges were to receive a full independent inspection at the being of the CRC Environmental Impact Statement. The previous studies stated adding capacity depending on the condition of the current crossings with either a supplemental or replacement if necessary. No independent inspection of the bridges had happened.

In 2010 the Independent Review Panel (IRP) asked for the complete independent inspection of the bridges, a list of repairs, cost of repairs, a timeline for repairs, and why they were not repairing the bridges? Who had made the decision to remove the bridges instead of repairing? In 2010 5 years into the EIS which is usually a 1-3 year process the bridges and their condition was "unknown". An independent inspection of the bridges had not taken place yet so there was no list of bridge repairs and the CRC staff had recommended the Locally Preferred Alternative which was remove the current bridges and replace them.

In 2013 US Rep Jaime Herrera Beutler sent a letter to the Washington State Department of Transportation Secretary a Lead Agency and CRC Signatory Agency asking for the condition of the bridges. "In the meantime, we must ensure that the current bridge is safe for the thousands of commuters that cross it each day. We ask that the agency provide us with an assessment of the safety level and potential hazards for the I-5 Columbia River Bridge, as well as options to upgrade and improve the bridge to mitigate whatever risks may exist." Eight Washington Legislators signed onto the letter. Eight years into the process and after the FEIS of the CRC has died due to lack of support and no funding the question of what are the structural repairs needed on the bridge and why can't they be repaired. I do not believe answer was every provided to the elected officials questioning the need to replace the bridges.

Letter attached.

2025 there is still no independent inspection of the bridges on Bridge Replacement Project web site. The same goes for an independent inspection by specialists on the seismic risk of the bridges this was pointed out in 2010 by the IRP. Both full and independent report should be readily available for structural integrity and seismic with a complete list of repairs, cost, necessity, and timing.

Without a full inspection of the bridge there is no justification for removing the bridges.

2005 The Interstate Bridge Electrical Upgrade states the bridges have more than 60 years of serviceable life left.

Document attached

Fourth Point

The age of the bridges is not a reason to remove the historically protected bridges.

See attached bridge ages in Oregon and Washington

Fifth Point

The NEPA Process has not been and is not being followed. There is not an oversight committee all the committee are advisory only. The Project Sponsor Agencies have not held hearings and the Purpose

and Needs Statement, Problem Definition, and the Evaluation Criteria for the Bridge Replacement Project and the CRC have not been adopted by the Signatory Agencies according to Oregon Transportation Commission 2024 answer to my FOIA request. The Bridge Replacement Project was asked to response with the Public Meeting Notices, dates, sign-in sheets, minutes, and videos for the Signatory Agencies formal Adopt of the Purpose and Needs Statement, Problem Definition, and the Evaluation Criteria. No such document exist for the CRC or BRP however "advisory and steering committees" have accept staffs drafting the Lead Documents for the EIS and SEIS as well as recommending the Locally Preferred Alternative.

Sharon Nasset

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Columbia River Crossing Original Scope

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8VfG_kerPzl

1. Original Project Scope Columbia River Crossing

Rob DeGraff is explaining the scope of the Columbia River Crossing Project to the CRC Joint

Transportation of Washington and Oregon Commission hearing. Stating previous transportation studies

recommend added capacity as needed across the river NOT replacement of the current bridges. This statement is consistent with the Federal Register and the CRC Study Area map. The I-5 Transportation

and Trade Partnership Environmental Impact Statement recommendations.

CRC Project Manager Rob DeGraff

2. Rob DeGraff is addressing the Columbia River Crossing 39 Member Task Force at their second meeting in 2006. Columbia River Crossing Project is expected to analysis a Third Bridge Corridor. The

question was asked about "Studying a Third Bridge Crossing." The Project Manager clearly states that

the Federal Highway Administration is expecting it to be looked at and it will be brought in during

NEPA Scoping. The Third Bridge Now Corridor was brought in during the Scoping EIS and was removed without being “vetted” deviation from the CRC Federal Register 2005.

Arch Miller

This video is former Vancouver Port Commissioner Arch Miller telling the CRC Task Force citizen advisory committee to remove and not study the Third Bridge Corridor (RC-14) brought in during NEPA Scoping violating the NEPA EIS. The fact that an elected official would brazenly stand up and tell the Official Governors’ CRC Task Force and community that “HE” Thinks and What “HE” wants and what “HE” believes. That we MUST do as we are told! Totally scrap having a fair and honest process or a comparable alternative. The Port of Vancouver Commissioner’s statements about the I-5 Partnership recommendation were false <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jdnbv6Rtgg>

Removal of alternatives and components community supported in the EIS by staff and co-chairs

Citizen’s advisory task force

Attached documentation

1999 I-5 Corridor Study Fewer Bridges

2005 I-5 Bridge condition with Oregon Seal (Electrical Upgrade)

The Oregon and Washington have old bridges are is not a reason to remove a bridge structure is the test

ODOT Budget Note 2011 requiring additional alternatives to be studied

Oregon State Historical Preservation Office concerns with the CRC process and lack of alternatives

Feb 11, 2009 letter from WA Senator Benton and signed Bi-state by removing alternatives the NEPA Process had not been follow

July 12, 2006 Board of Clark County Commissioners state concerns the CRC

July 23, 2010 Board of Clark County Commissioners Third Bridge Now option was not vetted

August 29, 2013 Board of Clark County Commissioners

December 18, 2005 CRC NEPA is substantially flawed and arguably illegitimate.

Nov. 15, 2010 SW Washington Regional Council a CRC Signatory Agency Third Bridge not vetted

C-TRAN De21 2009 A CRC Signatory Agency "R-14 a port to port connection" was eliminated

C-TRAN Oct. 28, 2010 RC-14 did not examine an I-5 spur.

Jan., 19, 2010 a letter from the Mayors of Portland and Vancouver, Metro President David Bragdon, and Clark County Commissioner Chair Steve Stuart stating major concerns and requirements for support

A letter from May 19, 2010 Metro President David Bragdon. Metro a CRC Signatory Agency

A letter from May 5, 2021 Metro President David Bragdon. Metro a CRC Signatory Agency