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February 4, 2014

Jerry Turner, President
Clackamas County Business Alliance
365 Warner Milne Road, #202
Oregon City, OR 97045

RE: Clackamas County Resolution No. 2013-94 letter

Original Sent Via Email

Dear Mr. Turner:

Thank you for your letter indicating the Clackamas County Business Alliance's support for the Clackamas County Board of County Commissioners Resolution (Resolution No.2013-94) on the potential effect the I-5 bridge replacement project could have on Interstate 205.

Your letter outlines three negative consequences you believe would occur as a result of tolling the I-5 replacement bridge. I would like to respond to each of those consequences directly and offer additional information that may help better inform future discussions and actions.

- *Compromising State and County investments already underway in the Sunrise Corridor System.* We know that future congestion in the I-205 corridor will occur with or without tolling on I-5 because the regional population is forecasted to increase by 750,000 people by 2035. ODOT and our regional and local partners use regionally adopted models and forecasts to guide infrastructure investments in a synchronized, system-wide approach for the entire transportation network. The investments in the Sunrise Corridor are part of a planned system that recognizes future growth and will not be compromised by tolling the I-5 replacement bridge. In addition, as part of the most recent STIP Update process, ODOT funded design of additional improvements on I-205 just South of the I-84 interchange to improve the safety and operations of I-205.
- *Further exacerbating problematic congestion between Abernethy Bridge to Stafford Road as well as the South 205 Corridor from Highway 213 to I-5.* Our analysis, as well as the analysis conducted by the investment grade consultant, projects negligible differences in traffic volumes on the southern portion of I-205 due to toll-related diversion.
- *The recent investment grade analysis casts doubt on previous estimates of trip diversion, and shows tolling the CRC may cause gridlock on I-205 as soon as 2022.* The recent investment grade analysis provides the most current data for toll revenue forecasting purposes by using prudent assumptions that will not overstate revenue and validates previous project analysis on I-205 traffic levels.

A 20-year forecast horizon was carefully evaluated for all bridge replacement alternatives through the Environmental Impact Statement process completed in 2011. These analyses projected that the I-205 bridge would reach capacity (roughly 200,000 vehicles per day) with or without the replacement I-5 crossing by the year 2030. The recently completed *Investment Grade Analysis* validates that the I-205 bridge would approach capacity with about 196,000 daily trips by 2036 and actually shows slightly lower total traffic volumes on I-205 than the final EIS. It further confirms, as expected, that diversion to I-205 will be higher at the onset of tolls, but over time, regional growth and congestion on I-205 will lead more and more cross-river traffic back to I-5, reducing diversion to I-205. It is also worth noting that diversion to I-205 is primarily expected to occur more during non-peak hours – when there is capacity on I-205.

ODOT appreciates the work of the Clackamas County Business Alliance to promote healthy economic growth throughout the county and entire metro area by advocating for public and private policy decisions that promote job creation and economic vitality.

The Columbia River Crossing project, designated in 2008 as a project of national significance, is also critical to promoting job creation and economic vitality. Local, regional, state, national and international trade markets depend on moving goods and services over the I-5 bridge and through at least one of the five interchanges connecting the interstate system with access to deep water shipping, up-river barging, two water-level transcontinental rail lines, and the Ports of Vancouver and Portland. Nearly 5,000 Oregon companies export their products and services abroad. And for every billion dollars in additional goods sold overseas, 5,100 new jobs are created in Oregon.¹

Tolling the I-5 replacement bridge and the diversion impacts to I-205 have been evaluated, analyzed and considered since 2005 and are part of the project approved by FHWA and FTA through the Record of Decision issued in 2011. ODOT shares your view that transportation is an important economic driver and we recognize the importance of both the I-205 and the I-5 corridors to moving goods, services and people safely and efficiently.

Sincerely,



Kris Strickler

Project Director

I-5 Columbia River Crossing Project

¹ International Trade Administration, 2013, "Jobs Supported by Exports 2012: An Update," Washington.