January 19, 2010

Governor Christine Gregoire
Office of the Governor
PO Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Governor Kulongoski
160 State Capitol
900 Court Street
Salem, Oregon 97301-4047

Dear Governors Gregoire and Kulongoski;

The four of us and the local governments we represent support construction of an improved Interstate 5 crossing of the Columbia River along with related improvements in the Bridge Influence Area. It is in this light that we write this letter. As soon as scheduling will allow, we look forward to meeting with you to further discuss our ideas and how we can jointly move CRC project construction forward.

We remain committed to a Columbia River Crossing project. An appropriately designed, financed, and managed transportation infrastructure improvement will benefit both our region and our states. We share a project vision that will reduce vehicle accidents, replace aging infrastructure, enhance marine navigation, expand the availability and accessibility of high capacity transit, improve bicycle and pedestrian access and safety, and improve reliability for the freight movement that is so critical to our region's economy.

The CRC project stands at a critical juncture. We recognize that significant study and assessment work has occurred, yet there remain outstanding issues of concern. Notwithstanding our stated support for a CRC project, we believe that cost, physical and environmental elements of the project as currently proposed impose unacceptable impacts on our communities.

These impacts, in combination with the project's high cost and financial risks and questions about whether important objectives will be achieved, make support for the project difficult.

To ensure development of a viable Columbia River Crossing, we respectfully request a stronger voice for our local governments in decisions about the project. We seek to join with you in an unprecedented states/local partnership to get this project firmly on the path to success. To do so, we propose the following shared work elements:

- **Complete the development of performance targets for the project, and use those targets to model and evaluate LPA refinements and other design options.**

- **Develop a clear and accountable performance-based management plan for the operation of the constructed project.**

- **Create a project financing plan that protects local taxpayers and road users.** We continue to have concerns about the opportunity costs imposed on our respective communities by a project with a price tag of this magnitude. We need to better understand the likely range of investment by all partners to ensure the project's costs are fair, provide high benefit-to-cost, and do not cannibalize funding for other priority projects in the coming decades.

- **Provide project funds for the local governments represented on the Project Sponsors Council to hire and supervise independent experts to verify critical project assumptions and help evaluate the performance of proposed refinements.** A project of this magnitude warrants independent evaluation by experts with experience in state-of-the-art forecasting and analytical methods including: (1) traffic volume growth, mode split, population and employment growth; (2) the effects of change in induced travel demand as an output or result of the design and operations choices; (3) the land use, transportation and economic consequences of major design options and tolling schemes under consideration; (4) evaluation of forecasts in the context of the adopted performance measures for the project; and (5) consideration of project improvements in the context of a larger regional and interstate system (i.e., taking into account potential impacts on I-5 upstream and downstream of the project, I-205, and parallel arterials.)

- **Commit to meeting the needs of the Hayden Island Community.** Recent refinements to the LPA have resulted in significant negative impacts to the businesses and residents of Hayden Island. The project must support island businesses and neighborhood livability, and advance the objectives of the Hayden Island Plan.

We are aware that Washington's Puget Sound region has successfully moved large transportation projects forward in a similar vein to that which we are proposing here – where local elected leaders and WSDOT are mutual partners in state-sponsored projects, and project decisions are made transparently. We believe local involvement in those instances has led to better projects, and we believe that applying the same model here would lead to a lower cost, higher performing CRC project.

We seek to work collaboratively with CRC project staff, and to bring the results of this work to our colleagues on the Project Sponsors Council and to the departments of transportation for consideration.

We recognize that this project is unusually complex and has a broad variety of stakeholders. Our suggestions for how to restructure the delivery of this project are intended to acknowledge that complexity and utilize it as a strength. The result: higher public trust and confidence, and a better, implementable Columbia River Crossing project.

Sincerely,

Sam Adams
Mayor, City of Portland

Tim Leavitt
Mayor, City of Vancouver

David Bragdon
President, Metro Council

Steve Stuart
Clark County Commissioner, Chair