



February 16, 2009

Dear member of the congressional delegation,

I was proud to be part of the 39-member task force that spent three years reviewing options for the new Columbia River Crossing. AAA Oregon/Idaho, which represents more than 725,000 members, has been impressed by the review process and supports the Locally Preferred Alternative recommended by the task force.

A safer, less congested crossing is a critical issue for AAA members. We believe the Locally Preferred Alternative is the best way to meet our members' needs, while planning for the economic and environmental future of our rapidly growing region.

The Locally Preferred Alternative decreases traffic by extending light rail to Clark County, according to Metro's nationally-renown traffic model. Without light rail and tolls, there would be 225,000 daily auto trips across the bridge. However, with the Locally Preferred Alternative, there will only be 178,000 auto trips per day. For those commuters who choose to drive, the Crossing will also provide a bridge that is designed to meets modern seismic requirements.

There are currently 300 accidents a year in the Crossing area. It is estimated that the new Crossing will reduce accidents by up to 75 percent by eliminating 10 high-crash locations. Trucks are currently involved in more than twice as many collisions as other vehicles, due to the design and constraints of the current bridge. The new Crossing with improved interchange design will make I-5 safer for cars, buses, trucks, pedestrians and bicyclists.

In addition to providing a safer crossing, the Locally Preferred Alternative has a reduced carbon print compared to the no build option. The construction and use of the new Crossing would produce less greenhouse gas emissions than the no build alternative.

The Locally Preferred Alternative should reduce congestion dramatically without increasing the number of cars using the bridge. Fewer cars on the Crossing will decrease commuter times and provide a safer means of transportation. I believe the Locally Preferred Alternative provides the best outcome for the mobility of Oregonians.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marie Dodds', written in a cursive style.

Marie Dodds,
Director of Government & Public Affairs for AAA Oregon/Idaho