

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security

United States
Coast Guard



Commander
Thirteenth Coast Guard District

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16591
04 March 2024

Mr. Greg Johnson, IBR Program Administrator
Mr. Thomas Goldstein, Federal Highway Administration
Mr. Jeff Horton, Federal Transit Administration

Subject: Interstate Bridge Replacement Program, Design Options

Greetings:

I sincerely appreciate the continued coordination between your agencies and the U.S. Coast Guard in pursuit of permitting a replacement Interstate 5 bridge over the Columbia River. The Coast Guard understands this is a critical piece of infrastructure and the Coast Guard is committed to supporting a timely permitting and build process.

During our latest discussions with you it came to light that IBR would no longer be including a bascule bridge design option in the pending NEPA Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) as it would delay release of the document and negatively impact the project's proposed timeline. As I understand, an additional ship simulation would be required to analyze navigational impacts with a 300-foot horizontal span between bridge piers of the bascule span. I believe it is possible to delay this additional ship simulation to a later date that would support the USACE 408 permitting process. In this scenario the IBR program would be able to use existing bascule bridge analysis already included in Appendix D with any necessary updates to ensure the SEIS provides adequate analysis to meaningfully consider impacts of a bascule bridge design option on navigation.

Given the current Preliminary Navigation Clearance Determination requirements, and the fact that the bascule bridge design has been analyzed, the Coast Guard recommends the bascule bridge design option be kept in the SEIS unless subsequent project developments obviate the need for a movable span design option.

I appreciate your consideration on this matter and look forward to continued discussions as we strive to replace and improve the existing structure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brendan J. Harris".

Brendan J. Harris
Chief, Waterways Management Branch
Commander, U.S. Coast Guard
Thirteenth Coast Guard District