

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT AND
TRANSPORTATION**

March 06, 2001 Hearing Room 343
3:00 pm Tapes 48 - 50

MEMBERS PRESENT: **Sen. Gary George, Chair**
 Sen. Rick Metsger, Vice-Chair
 Sen. Margaret Carter
 Sen. Bev Clarno
 Sen. Ken Messerle

STAFF PRESENT: **Patrick Balducci, Administrator**
 Nancy Masee, Committee Assistant

MEASURE/ISSUES HEARD:
 Columbia River Channel Deepening
 SB 173 Public Hearing
 SJR 5 Public Hearing and Work Session
 SB 73 Public Hearing and Work Session

These minutes are in compliance with Senate and House Rules. Only text enclosed in quotation marks reports a speaker's exact words. For complete contents, please refer to the tapes.

TAPE/#	Speaker	Comments
TAPE 48, A		
003	Sen. Gary George	Chair. Opens meeting at 3:10 p.m. Opens public hearing on SB 63.
SB 63 PUBLIC HEARING		
007	Patrick Balducci	Committee Administrator. Explains SB 63
026	Art Schlack	Association of Oregon Counties (AOC). Supports SB 63. Explains the reasons for creating a disaster relief fund to establish matching funds for federal monies. States that Oregon is one of only six states without such a fund. Supports the -2 amendments (EXHIBIT A).
045	Tony Hyde	Commissioner Columbia County. Describes extensive damage to Columbia County grade school from the recent earthquake. The full cost to the county will be in the millions of dollars.
084	Jon Oshel	Association of Oregon Counties. Describes how difficult it is for small agencies to meet matching fund requirements. Explains expenditure during the year for road construction. Describes disaster funding.
100	Schlack	Says the -3 amendments are supported by AOC (EXHIBIT B).
132	Dennis Olmsted	Department of Geology and Mineral Industries (DOGAMI). Expresses the need for an emergency fund for disasters. Describes DOGAMI's involvement with mitigation of hazards (EXHIBIT K).
140	Mary Botkin	Council 75 Supports SB 63. Represents coastal counties. Describes Tillamook County's infrastructure problems.
160	Scott Porter	Oregon Emergency Management Association (OEMA). Supports SB 63 and SJR 5. Discusses disaster-related losses by communities. Discusses the need for viable sources of funding.

		Describes the new partnering approach for disaster legislation (EXHIBIT C) .
280	Sen. Carter	Supports the partnering of different levels of governments.
283	Staff	Submits EXHIBIT D from the League of Oregon Cities.
285	Chair George	Closes public hearing. Opens work session on SB 63.
WORK SESSION SB 63		
288	Sen. Metsger	MOTION: Moves SB 63 –3 amendments be adopted.
289		VOTE: 5-0
	Chair	Hearing no objection, declares the motion CARRIED.
290	Sen. Metsger	MOTION: Moves SB 63 BE REFERRED to the committee on Ways and Means with a DO PASS AS AMENDED recommendation.
292		VOTE: 5-0
	Chair	Hearing no objection, declares the motion CARRIED.
293	Chair George	Closes work session. Opens public hearing on SJR5.
PUBLIC HEARING SJR 5		
294	Balducci	Explains SJR 5.
319	Norene Goplen	Clackamas. Oregon Voluntary Organizations Assisting in Disasters (VOAD). Supports SJR5. Describes the work of the organization that has been active since the 1980s. Explains Oregon VOAD works extensively with governments at all levels during disasters (EXHIBIT E).
460	Schlack	Speaks for the –2 amendments. Urges passage of SJR 5 with the –2 amendments (EXHIBIT F).
TAPE 49, A		
040	Oshel	Urges passing SB 63-2 and SJR-5.
045	Chair George	Closes public hearing on SJR 5. Opens work session on SJR 5.
WORK SESSION SJR 5		
07	Sen. Metsger	MOTION: Moves the –2 amendments to SJR 5 BE ADOPTED.
048		VOTE: 5-0
	Chair	Hearing no objection, declares the motion CARRIED.
050	Sen. Metsger	MOTION: Moves SJR 5 be sent to the floor with a BE ADOPTED AS AMENDED recommendation.
051		VOTE: 5-0
	Chair George	Hearing no objection, declares the motion CARRIED. SEN. MESSERLE will lead discussion on the floor.
053	Chair George	Closes work session. Opens public hearing on SB 173.
SB 173 PUBLIC HEARING		
063	Balducci	Explains SB 173. Discusses SB 173 –1 amendment (EXHIBIT G).
078	Chair George	Explains there are some additional issues to include in the bill and the committee will return to the bill at a later date.
082	Balducci	Explains the work meeting that developed the amendment.
096	Sen. Messerle	Asks why in Section 2, number 1, the reason for changing from two wheels to three.
096	Chair George	Explains some of the further possible changes to the amendments. Closes public hearing on SB 173. Opens informational meeting on the Columbia River Channel.
COLUMBIA RIVER CHANNEL DEEPENING		
140	Keith Levitt	Port of Portland. Discusses the channel-deepening project on the Columbia River. Legislature is asked to reauthorize prior

		decisions. Describes the river bottom and dredging process to deepen it. Describes the environmental status and testing of the river bottom. States that the estuary safety and impact of deepening are taken into consideration (EXHIBIT H).
266	Bob Hrdlicka	Marine Manager, Port of Portland. States the project is designed to help the shippers in Oregon. Maritime transportation relates to over 75,000 jobs in Oregon. There are 7,000 jobs directly related to river transportation. Describes the size of vessels that would be able to use the Columbia carrying containers.
360	Ken Armstrong	Executive Director, Oregon Ports Group. Port of St. Helens is a sponsor.
404	John McCulley	Oregon Agriculture Council of Oregon. Represents the agricultural cooperatives that support the channel deepening.
TAPE 48, B		
006	Sen. Messerle	Asks what other crops are sent down the river. Do these crops include hay and forest products?
010	McCulley	Answers Norpac Foods sends frozen vegetables for overseas shipping and many other agricultural products.
015	Hrdlicka	Responds that rye grass seed is a large product sent for animal feed in the far east.
022	Sen. Messerle	Asks about Washington, Idaho, and Montana transporting products via the Columbia River.
025	Levitt	Responds that much grain comes from those states to the Columbia River. Container volume comes from Washington through the Port of Portland. Terminal 6 serves 20 states by handling grain.
040	Chair George	Thanks the witnesses.
046	Sen. Joan Dukes	Senate District 1. Describes channel-deepening projects that would be detrimental to the river. Asks the committee to consider the testimony following.
080	Matt Van Ess	Columbia River Estuary Study Task Force (CREST). Describes the task force as a 25-year-old organization representing local governments. CREST does not support channel deepening as it is presented. Describes the process of deepening the Columbia River. Discusses that both Washington and Oregon, along with the National Marine Fisheries, have denied aspects of the channel-deepening project (EXHIBIT I).
115	Sen. Messerle	Asks about blasting in the river.
120	Van Ess	Answers that there are several basalt areas that will be blasted. Describes sediment testing of the riverbed. Discusses ocean disposal sites that are a concern. Explains erosion impact. Stresses the negative impact of channel deepening on the estuary in general. States no environmental laws have been met.
200	Sen. Carter	Asks under what conditions CREST could support the project.
201	Van Ess	Answers that CREST has commented on the draft and final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and when the concerns CREST outlined are met and when the legal requirements are met, CREST would be supportive.
207	Sen. Carter	Discusses the issue of overall congested transportation routes and asks how communities can come together to solve this.
220	Van Ess	Answers that CREST has been part of the project to find a process.
238	Chair George	Asks for a description of the proposed staged process.

244	Van Ess	States that Benson Beach is eroding and it is proposed to deposit dredged material on the beach. Benson Beach has not been included as an option. Says there are other options for use of dredged material.
282	Peter Huhtala	President, Columbia River Keeper Organization. Explains the concerns of the organization. Emphasizes the River Keepers wish to work with solutions to the deepening project. Discusses the fisheries decline and fears more loss due to sediment dumping.
400	Sen. Carter	Asks how commerce can partner on the Columbia.
TAPE 49, B		
010	Huhtala	Replies that a 43' channel will not produce a miracle for the river. The great ships that carry containers will be dealing with the very few deep-water ports on the coasts.
015	Sen. Carter	Discusses the long-term quest to deepen the channel and preserve the estuaries, to support families economically and environmentally.
063	Huhtala	Relates a proposal that would move large ships in and out on the tide and which would require a deep "waiting" place on the river.
073	Chair George	Comments on his personal experience of shipping a crop. Expresses interest in rail transportation to ports.
090	Doug Thompson	Astoria City Council. Discusses changes in transport of commodities. Wants a regional look at the estuary with salmon retrieval and commerce. States that the estuary community wants to participate but no discussion can take place until those in control cannot dredge the river deeper. Past ways of doing business are not acceptable (EXHIBIT J) .
121	Sen. Carter	Asks if the deepening is impossible without undue damage to the river.
124	Thompson	There is no such thing as environmentally-friendly dredging. Alludes to the Corps of Engineers dredging projects and refers to articles in the Washington Post relating to negative results.
128	Huhtala	Comments that there are very few ports that are 100 miles inland besides Portland and Philadelphia. Each project has its own specific elements. The endangered salmon complicate the project along with the river contaminants.
174	Chair George	Asks about deep-water ports utilizing rail transport to the port. For example, could expanded rail serve Astoria.
190	Van Ess	Responds that alternatives need to be researched.
208	Huhtala	Comments on Astoria as a deep-water port. Says it is not realistic to use Astoria as a deep-water port due to problems in ship accessibility at the mouth of the river. However, it is realistic to use Astoria to move cargo. Rail lines could be a viable option.
230	Doug Thompson	Comments on Astoria's opposition to the channel deepening. Emphasizes that Astoria could not be used as a deep-water port. Discusses the old ways that will not work. Considers the dredging project dead.
400	Sen. Messerle	Comments on the total economy from surrounding states going through Portland and the impact on their commerce if the channel is not maintained.

TAPE 50, A

010	Huhtala	Answers that maintaining the channel at its present depth is supported.
020	Sen. Messerle	Asks what action would satisfy the estuary groups to avoid litigation.
030	Huhtala	Answers the current channel deepening proposal is under federal litigation already and the Columbia River Keeper is an intervenor. Current ongoing maintenance to the channel has problems too. Proclaims that the group is interested in helping find a long-term solution including trade enhancement.
040	Chair George	Asks if there are any ways that the estuary group could support the deepening. Can they envision making this issue work?
045	Huhtala	Answers there may be some other options to be deal with the deepening of the channel. There may be some ways to mitigate it.
055	Chair George	Adjourns meeting at 5:05 p.m.

Submitted By,

Reviewed By,

Nancy Masee,
Committee Assistant

Patrick Balducci,
Administrator

EXHIBIT SUMMARY

- A – SB 63, -2 Amendment, Staff, 7 pp**
- B – SB 63, -3 Amendment, Staff, 8 pp**
- C – SB 63, Written testimony, Scott Porter, 2 pp**
- D – SB 63, Written testimony, Christy Monson, 1 p**
- E – SJR 5, Written testimony, Norene Goplen, 2 pp**
- F – SJR 5, -2 Amendment, Art Schlack, 1 p**
- G – SB 173, -1 Amendment, Staff, 16 pp**
- H – Written testimony, Keith Levitt, 4 pp**
- I – Written testimony, Matt Van Ess, 40 pp**
- J – Written testimony, Doug Thompson, 4 pp**
- K – Written testimony, Dennis Olmsted, 1 p**