

HOUSE AND SENATE COMMITTEES ON TRANSPORTATION

February 05, 1999 Field TripPortland Union Station

7:00 a.m. Tapes 16 - 17

MEMBERS PRESENT: Rep. Bob Montgomery, Chair

Rep. Mike Lehman, Vice-Chair

Rep. Richard Devlin

Rep. Jeff Kropf

Rep. Jerry Krummel

Rep. Jane Lokan

Rep. Jackie Taylor

Rep. Vicki Walker

Rep. Larry Wells

SENATE MEMBERS

PRESENT: Sen. Marilyn Shannon, Chair

Sen. Lee Beyer

Sen. Susan Castillo

Sen. Joan Dukes

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Rep. Jim Hill

STAFF PRESENT: Janet Adkins, Administrator

Brad Daniels, Administrative Support

MEASURE/ISSUES HEARD: Informational meeting with Washington legislators about regional transportation issues

recording system used for this meeting was not the same as those in the Capitol hearing rooms. As a result the tapes are longer and do not have seamless transitions. All Senators and Representatives from Oregon are listed above; any other Representative or Senator named in the body of these minutes is from Washington.

TAPE/#	Speaker	Comments
TAPE 16, A		
005	Charles Hales	City Commissioner, Portland. Asks the legislators and the audience to introduce themselves.
118	Claudia House	Manager, Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) Rail Division. Explains her responsibilities and those of her staff in the Rail Division. Reviews the morning's agenda (EXHIBIT A).
160	Bob Krebs	Describes the Pacific Northwest Passenger Rail Program, its economic effects and funding sources. Presents the long and short range goals of the rail program, encapsulated in part by the statement "2 trains, 2 hours by 2002" (EXHIBITS B & C)
200	Krebs	Discusses the progress made during 1998, including the increase in ridership and public satisfaction with the train system, better trains and facilities, and the success of the motor coach system.
261	Krebs	Outlines the objectives of the Amtrak rail system: to provide mobility and accessibility for people with disabilities, to stimulate economic opportunities for Oregon citizens and businesses, and to meet environmental quality standards. Acknowledges that there are considerable challenges, especially in the area of funding.
330	Hales	Outlines his role in the process and his two areas of emphasis when approaching transportation issues: stewardship and balance. Describes the decrease in transportation funding coupled with the increase in lane miles.
380	Hales	Stresses the reliance of Portland on Union Station and the rail program as well as the possibilities for alternative modes of transit.
420	Sen. Marilyn Shannon	Asks how much the actual funding has increased.
425	Hales	Responds that the spending power of net revenue has declined. Notes the rise in construction inflation, lane miles and vehicle miles traveled.
447	James Slakey	Director of Public Transportation and Rail Division, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). Discusses the high speed rail program's impact on the public, businesses and regions.
500	Slakey	Stresses the importance of a regional view of the entire I-5 corridor and its

		transportation problems. Defends the choice of rail as the right place for investment.
540	Slakey	Reviews the expectations of the Washington Legislature and how Amtrak has met those expectations, including cost recovery, run times and frequency.
600	Gil Mallery	President, Amtrak West. Notes the regional and national success of the Pacific Northwest Rail Program. Stresses frequency as the way to increase the role of rail in a comprehensive transportation system. Emphasizes the importance of stable partnerships with state governments.
680	Hales	Asks the Washington legislators to explain the rationale behind their decision to invest in rail.
706	Rep. Ruth Fisher	Explains her desire for a multi-modal transportation system and agency in Washington. Reviews the history of transportation decisions in Washington.
728	Rep. Karen Schmidt	Stresses the importance of options, new technology and instilling a Europe-style vision of trains.
752	Sen. Mary Margaret Haugen	Emphasizes the importance of partnerships and public support.
767	Sen. Georgia Gardner	Notes the public's desire for more trains in north Washington.
785	Sen. Susan Castillo	Asks about the views of legislators whose districts are not near the rail corridor and how the Washington Legislature discusses rail issues with these members.
796	Rep. Schmidt	Explains that rail expansion to eastern Washington is a goal.
826	Rep. Shirley Hankins	Underscores that transportation is viewed as a serious and non-partisan issue in Washington.
853	Sen. Shannon	Asks if Washington has a constitutional amendment that requires gas tax and registration revenue to go to roads. Questions why, if only cars and trucks pay for roads, everyone should pay for rail.
868	Sid Morrison	Secretary, WSDOT. Stresses that the I-5 Corridor is the testing ground for inter-city rail. Indicates that 65% of the U.S. population living west of Denver lives within ten miles of I-5.
907	Rep. Lokan	Asks how Washington has conquered opponents who have criticized rail's

		inability to take passengers to multiple destinations.
925	Rep. Schmidt	Emphasizes that people will take the mode of transportation that makes the most sense.
942	Rep. Fisher	Concedes that a commuter transportation service is necessary.
TAPE 16, B		
002	Sen. Don Benson	Asks about private contributions and British Columbia's contribution. Asks about freight trains running the corridor
007	Ken Uznanski	Manager, Rail Division. States that up to 70 freight trains run the corridor per day
029	Rep. Fisher	Reports that Washington transportation budget is \$3 billion
032	Rep. Kropf	Asks if trains can be divided to reduce the number of cars and empty seats.
040	Curt Laird	Amtrak Seattle. Replies that buses offer the best service now. States that trains are not easy to couple or uncouple, but as frequency increases, so will ridership.
056	Krebs	Adds that coupling would add time and would require safety concerns. Notes that the ODOT Rail Division is looking at getting smaller, commuter-style trains
071	Mallery	Cites the tremendous growth in the West and their concerns about having enough equipment.
085	Rep. Schmidt	Asks if Oregon is dedicated to investing in their rail program.
092	Sen. Haugen	Discusses the focus on immediate local areas as well as the transient nature of society. Notes the importance of looking outside the local area and creating a regional, multi-state perspective.
108	Rep. Krummel	States that to reject a multi-modal approach is to be short-sighted. Stresses that a 50-year approach is necessary.
127	Sen. Beyer	Expresses shock about the dramatic increase in traffic on I-5 and the problems in Oregon and Washington.
161	Sen. Joan Dukes	Notes the importance educating people about rail in Oregon. Recognizes

		that Oregon should examine new modes of transportation.
183	Rep. Schmidt	Reiterates the importance of educating people about train travel and making it an option.
200	Rep. Fisher	Emphasizes the development of a rail culture.
207	Morrison	Expresses satisfaction about the partnership between the two states. Stresses that new equipment is the key to expanding rail options and popularity.
233	Rep. Wells	Comments on the general lack of experience with transportation in the Oregon committee. States that the Oregon members may be in the "show me" mode and may need more concrete information to understand the entire transportation issue.
255	Rep. Taylor	Acknowledges the confusion that often occurs between "rail" and "light rail."
260	Rep. Lehman	Notes the effect of term limits on legislators and their level of knowledge.
279	Rep. Devlin	Asks if there has been an improvement in tracks and signaling for freight trains as well as passenger trains in Washington.
287	Morrison	Replies yes.
295	Howells	Adds that northern railroad companies are more willing to invest than southern railroad companies.
331	Kay Van Sickle	Region 1 Manager, ODOT. Relates what ODOT is doing on the north-bound span of I-5. Discusses the congestion problems in the Banfield area, which is caused by lack of capacity, and the plans for improvement (EXHIBIT D) .
385	Van Sickle	Describes the congestion problem at Interstate Avenue and Delta Park and the prospective improvements there.
398	Rep. Kropf	Asks how the HOV lane is working
399	Van Sickle	Replies that it is working well. Discusses future collaborative efforts between the agencies and the I-5 trade corridor study as a way to build consensus about improvements for this area.
451	Mary Legry	Southwest Region, WSDOT. Stresses the importance of partnerships in

		projects like the Lewis and Clark Bridge. States that there are nine bridges shared by Oregon and Washington and describes plans for an overall strategy to address the problems with these bridges. Discusses the issues surrounding channel-deepening on the Columbia River. Mentions the seriousness of the Snake River Dam breaching and possible next steps in this project.
540	Sen. Dukes	Notes the importance of bi-state cooperation in education and information distribution relating to projects like the Lewis and Clark Bridge and the dredging of the Lower Columbia.
580	Rep. Schmidt	Expresses that dialogue is crucial for understanding regional issues and making smarter investments.
591	Tim Erickson	Commercial Vehicle Information Systems Network Project Manager, WSDOT. Explains CVISN and its advantages for the trucking industry.
632	Sen. Snyder	Explains the Lewis and Clark Bridge project and problems with congestion. Warns that the bridge is probably not earthquake-proof.
671	Rep. Bob Montgomery	Asks if a toll bridge is a possibility. Supports toll bridges.
674	Sen. Snyder	Replies that a toll is being discussed, not just for a short-term pay-off but for maintenance.
691	Sen. Dukes	Explains that the project benefits Longview more than Rainier. Stresses the lack of partnerships between public and private interests. Notes that toll bridges have always been restricted by the language in Oregon statutes.
730	Rep. Lokan	Supports tolls on bridges as one way to fund transportation.
745	Rep. Pennington	Notes that long-term economic possibilities are extensive for the port of Rainier.
TAPE 17, A		
013	Rep. Val Ogden	Explains the I-5 bridge maintenance problems, their seriousness, and the lack of sufficient answers despite the involvement of a number of people and agencies.
038	Van Sickel	Cites the extensive effort by ODOT and WSDOT to develop an integrated traffic plan to deal with these problems
064	Rep. Ogden	Stresses that community leaders should be involved and be able to provide leadership.

067	Wagner	Describes the ownership issues involving bridges.
074	Crunican	Stresses that this project is in the beginning phases and will rapidly move to the public notification phase.
085	Sen. Benton	Underlines that Clark County is one of the top five revenue- generating districts in Oregon. Cites this statistic as an inducement to provide a third lane near Vancouver and make the commute more bearable. Describes the congestion problems in this area.
111	Rep. Montgomery	Asks Crunican if this project is in the STIP.
113	Sen. Shannon	Notes that Washington has continual oversight during the interim; they are able to answer all the questions because they have hands- on knowledge. Stresses the connection between policy and revenue oversight.
147	Rep. Montgomery	Asks if the I-5 project is in the STIP.
153	Crunican	Replies that the project is not in the STIP. Explains the overall problem and the efforts made to look at all the options, especially downstream capacity.
172	Sen. Benton	Expresses frustration with repetitious studies. Emphasizes that they have the appearance of a stonewall and an attempt to extend light rail to Vancouver.
194	Rep. Montgomery	Notes that the road capacity must be coupled with new construction.
227	Rep. Brian Hatfield	Explains the channel deepening project and the wisdom of the 35% investment by Oregon and Washington.
244	Sen. Dukes	States that Astoria has asked the corps of engineers to do another study. Stresses that one of the ports may be lost.
260	Sen. Snyder	Notes that the Corps of Engineers has spent five years on the study, but overlooked the impact on the crab industry.
267	Sen. Benton	Stresses the need to make the river accessible to Panmax ships. Notes that federal funding and state contributions are essential to the project.
295	Rep. Montgomery	Reports that Oregon has contributed money.
309	Rep. Hankins	Expresses concern about the prospect of breaching the Snake River dam. Notes that breaching a dam will destroy many communities and businesses. Stresses that the scientific facts on the studies are not accurate and have not

		paid enough attention to ocean fishing.
350	Rep. Fisher	States that breaching the dam will result in \$200 million damage to state roads. Strongly opposes breaching dams.
378	Rep. Krummel	States that fish have to go through a number of dams to get to the Snake River. Notes that he is introducing legislation to require ODOT to open up the east side of the state to a transportation corridor.
408	Rep. Schmidt	Suggests that a more formalized arrangement between the Oregon and Washington delegations would be beneficial.

Submitted By, Reviewed By,

Brad Daniels, Janet Adkins,

Administrative Support Administrator

EXHIBIT SUMMARY

A ñAgenda and background material, staff, 19 pp.

B ñMap, Bob Krebs, 1 p.

C ñPresentation, Bob Krebs, 10 pp.

D ñTestimony, Kay Van Sickel, 3 pp.