

## 9.0 DISTRICT RECOMMENDATIONS AND COMMENTS

Based upon this detailed report, the Vancouver Railroad Bridge, Mile 105.6 Columbia River presents an unreasonable obstruction to navigation. The following factors and comments have also been taken into consideration:

1. A horizontal clearance of 200 feet is considerably less than the channel width of 600 feet found in each direction from the Vancouver Railroad Bridge.
2. The navigation problems caused by a navigation span location near the right descending bank 0.8 mile downstream from I-5 Highway Bridge are exacerbated by the location of a ship loading facility immediately downstream the Vancouver Railroad Bridge. When transiting the alternate channels below the fixed spans of the I-5 Highway Bridge, tows are required to make two difficult turns in a distance of less than 0.8 mile. When tows are required to transit the lift spans on the I-5 Bridges the usual impediment of waiting for other traffic in the bridge zone is made worse by the drawbridge regulations that allow the I-5 Highway Bridge to remain closed to navigation 2½ hours each morning and 3½ hours each afternoon except on weekends and federal holidays. The ever increasing highway congestion is creating greater pressure to increase the periods the lift spans on the I-5 Highway Bridge are restricted to commercial navigation. Increasing the periods of restriction will not only be detrimental to profitable operation but will increase risk by requiring a greater number of tows to transit the bridges in darkness.
3. The location of I-5 Highway Bridge located about 0.8 mile above the bridge which has an alternate navigation channel located beneath a fixed span near the middle of river. Transiting the I-5 Highway Bridge requires two sharp turns that become too hazardous to attempt when the river elevation exceeds 6 feet on the I-5 Bridge gauge.
4. When the Vancouver Railroad Bridge is altered tows will be able to transit fixed spans on the I-5 Highway Bridge. Highway vehicular delay problems will be corrected and the delays waiting for vessels in the bridge zone will be dramatically reduced because less time will be required to transit the railroad bridge span.

The Coast Guard considers the Vancouver Railroad Bridge to be an unreasonable obstruction to navigation. From a navigational standpoint, the Columbia River commercial users would be best served by a Vancouver Railroad Bridge, which would provide a properly located horizontal opening of at least 300 feet. Moreover, the regional infrastructure would also be well served when the Vancouver Railroad Bridge is altered.