

# Southwest Washington officials respond to rejection of Prop. 1

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On Nov. 8, 10 current and newly-elected officials from across Clark County issued a joint statement in the wake of Clark County citizens' rejection of Proposition 1.

The statement was issued by U.S. Congresswoman Jaime Herrera Beutler, Washington State Senators Don Benton and Ann Rivers, Washington State Representatives Paul Harris and Liz Pike, candidates for Washington State Representative Brandon Vick and Julie Olson, Clark County Commissioner Tom Mielke, newly-elected Clark County Commissioner David Madore and Vancouver City Council Member Bill Turlay.

The issued statement called for a revision of the plan for the Columbia River Crossing and asks for an alternative plan for replacing the Interstate 5 Bridge. The statement was made two days after voters in the Clark County's C-TRAN district rejected a sales tax increase to pay for light rail operations. The current \$3.5 billion CRC proposal includes an extension of Portland's light rail system to Vancouver's Clark College.

In the statement released, the elected officials called the current I-5 bridge "inadequate" and said it must be addressed and a new direction is needed. Officials expressed concern that the CRC's mounting problems are "jeopardizing the project's chance for success" and that they care too much about this region to simply let it fail. The statement also points out funding problems of the project, including the fact that no state-level financing plan has earned the support of either Oregon or Washington legislatures to meet the \$900 million they are being asked to pay. The use of tolls to fund \$1.4 billion of the project's cost were also addressed in the statement as a problem.

The design of the CRC was also brought into question in the officials' statement, stating that currently, the CRC does not have a design that will earn the necessary permits to move forward. The Coast Guard has signaled that it will not permit a design with insufficient clearance capacity. Although a redesign will take more time, officials said significant delays to the project already appear inevitable.

The statement points out that the "most troubling" thing about the current design is that the project's users – the public – were discouraged from participating from the start.

"We want this process to move forward, but it's time for compromise," officials said in the statement. "Rather than issue ultimatums over what Clark County residents must accept, the CRC must produce a design that can earn the support of communities that rely on the I-5 roadway and Columbia River. That is



## COLUMBIA RIVER CROSSING

CLARK COUNTY VOTERS in the C-TRAN District rejected a sales tax increase to pay for light rail operations. The current \$3.5 billion Columbia River Crossing proposal includes an extension of Portland's light rail system to Vancouver's Clark College.

the only way this needed project will succeed. Once there is a project alternative that has the support of Clark County citizens, we will put all of our resources into making the bridge project a reality.”