

JAIME HERRERA BEUTLER
3RD DISTRICT, SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1602

□ 1130 LONGWORTH HOB
WASHINGTON D.C. 20515
(202) 225-3536

□ GENERAL O.O. HOWARD HOUSE
750 ANDERSON STREET, SUITE B
VANCOUVER, WA 98661
(360) 695-6292

WWW.JHB.HOUSE.GOV

February 3, 2016

Mayor Timothy D. Leavitt
City of Vancouver
415 West 6th Street
Vancouver, WA 98660

Dear Mayor Leavitt,

As you are well aware, the Columbia River Crossing (CRC) failed in large part because so many Clark County residents felt excluded from the process and railroaded toward a project they did not support. Elected officials can either repeat the mistakes of the past and fail to fix the I-5 crossing again, or learn from them and build support throughout the County for a new solution.

In what has been one of the more positive developments in recent memory, a bipartisan group of Clark County legislators has joined together to begin discussions with their counterparts on the Oregon side of the river on a new way forward. This coalition of legislators includes people from across the ideological spectrum, representing almost all of Clark County.

In yesterday's *Columbian* newspaper, you attacked one of the founding members of that coalition and implied that she should not be allowed to participate in the process. This is exactly the attitude that proved fatal to the CRC project. If we go into this process carrying grudges, clinging to the past, and excluding the people we disagree with, we are dooming ourselves to many more years of gridlock.

Personally, I don't agree with some of the members of the coalition on most issues, but they are duly elected Representatives and are entitled to a seat at the table on behalf of the people they serve. As Clark County's Representative in Congress, it is vital to me that the County as a whole be supportive of any new project. I still believe we must address the shortcomings of the I-5 bridge, but I will only move forward on securing federal funds for such a project if I know there has been an open, inclusive process. Shutting elected Representatives out of the very first stages of that process would be a terrible start.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jaime Herrera Beutler".

Jaime Herrera Beutler
Member of Congress