

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

COLUMBIA RIVER CHANNEL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

-- REVISED --

DRAFT SUPPLEMENTAL INTEGRATED FEASIBILITY REPORT
AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Public Hearing
September 5, 2002
Longview, Washington

-- -- --

1 LONGVIEW, WASHINGTON;
2 THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2002
3 6:00 P.M.

4 .
5 COLONEL HOBERNICHT: Thank you for
6 coming today. My name is Richard Hobernicht and I'm the
7 new district engineer for the Portland District United
8 States Army Corps of Engineers. Most of you probably knew
9 my predecessor, Colonel Raymond Butler. I look forward to
10 getting out in the communities and meeting each of you. If
11 you get a chance, please introduce yourself to me tonight.

12 This public hearing and the next one
13 in Astoria will be run with the aid of a professional
14 moderator. I will have some introductory remarks in a few
15 minutes, but at this time I'd like to transfer the meeting
16 over to Miss Jacqueline Abel to get it started.

17 Jacqueline.

18 MS. ABEL: Thank you.

19 Hi. As the Colonel said, my name is
20 Jacqueline Abel. I'm a professional facilitator and
21 mediator and I was asked by the U.S. Army Corps of
22 Engineers to be the moderator for tonight's meeting. I'm
23 not a staff member of any government agency. I was asked
24 to moderate to assure that a fair and impartial hearing of
25 information and concerns may occur tonight. I do not have

1 any stake in the outcome of today's hearing and I believe
2 I'm impartial on the issues here tonight.

3 I know many of you have very important
4 points that you would like to have heard by your
5 government officials. They are here to present an
6 overview of the status of the proposed Columbia River
7 Channel Improvement Program and to listen to what you have
8 to say to them. This is an important opportunity for all
9 of you that will require respect for the process and for
10 each other. I will need your help in order to let as many
11 of you as possible have the chance to say what you want
12 tonight. But before I discuss ground rules, let me make
13 sure you're in the right place.

14 The purpose of today's meeting is to
15 provide the public an opportunity to hear briefly from the
16 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers about the status of a
17 proposed improvement of the existing 40-foot Columbia
18 River Federal navigation channel and a Draft Supplemental
19 Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact
20 Statement that they have prepared and issued last July and
21 to provide you, the public, with an opportunity to submit
22 both oral and written comments.

23 We are holding this hearing because it
24 is important for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, for the
25 people of the region to have spoken and to have been

1 heard. The time you have taken to be here to make your
2 comments is very important and greatly appreciated. Thanks
3 to all of you for coming. To this end, we provided two
4 ways for you to make your thoughts and feelings known. You
5 may give testimony in this room or you may submit written
6 comments to the Corps. Written comments can be submitted
7 until September 15th of this year.

8 Before we begin, I'd like to review
9 the upcoming agenda for the evening and go over a few
10 administrative details. We will begin today by hearing a
11 bit more from Colonel Richard Hobernicht, District
12 Engineer, Portland District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.
13 He will give an introduction and introduce the rest of the
14 panel members sitting at the table tonight and then there
15 will be a brief presentation by Laura Hicks. When the
16 presentations are over, we will move into public
17 testimony. We've scheduled the hearing to end at 9:00
18 tonight. Individuals will be given five minutes to
19 testify. We may take a break during the evening to give
20 everyone a chance to stretch. All of the oral testimony
21 will be recorded by our court reporter for the public
22 record. If you also have your comments in written form,
23 we would appreciate a copy of them. Please note that
24 there's a drop off box in the open house area at the back
25 of room. Someone there can help you if you have written

1 comments with you. The Corps does want to hear what you
2 have to say in person or in writing.

3 Given the interest in the issues that
4 will be discussed today, I'm requesting that we all follow
5 these grounds rules, and you may have seen them on the way
6 in tonight. Speakers will be recognized in the order in
7 which they signed up to speak. Any elected public
8 officials who are present will be recognized first and I
9 know we do have a few of them here tonight. Treat each
10 speaker and the panels with respect. You may not agree
11 with what a person is saying, but everyone has a right to
12 their own views and we want to get them all on the record.
13 As strongly as you may feel about an idea you hear, please
14 keep side conversations and comments to a minimum so that
15 the court reporter can get all testimony into the record
16 and so others have ample time to make their comments as
17 well. Help me help you testify by being at the microphone
18 here in front and ready to testify when I call your name.
19 Be courteous to others and stop speaking when I let you
20 know that your time is up. Please follow my instructions
21 to help us all avoid confusion. Remember that today's
22 meeting is not an attempt to consensus or some kind of
23 vote. It's an opportunity for members of the public to
24 have their thoughts heard and considered by Federal
25 officials. Please don't disrupt that opportunity.

1 Because of time restraints and because
2 the representatives of the Corps are here to hear what you
3 have to say, responses to your direct testimony will not
4 be possible today but will be reflected in the Corps'
5 final report. To make sure we end on time, speakers will
6 be limited to five minutes. Your time is your own. And
7 in the interest of hearing from as many of you as
8 possible, your time may not be assigned to other people.
9 If you have already testified as a spokesperson for a
10 group or an HEC (phonetic) organization, you should not
11 testify again as an individual. Remember, you will have
12 10 additional days after the hearing to submit complete
13 written comments. As I said before, we intend to end the
14 meeting about 9:00 p.m. with brief remarks from Colonel
15 Hobernicht.

16 You may provide written comments on
17 the proposed improvement of the Columbia River Federal
18 navigation channel, specifically the Draft Supplemental
19 Integrated Feasibility Report and EIS, to the Corps by
20 September 15th at the address indicated in the public
21 notice or in the information sheets that are available.
22 And they were available in the back of the room if you
23 want to pick those up with the addresses so you can send
24 comments in later.

25 What will happen with all of your

1 comments? The Corps will review those comments submitted
2 in writing and the transcripts from the public testimony
3 at hearings like this one tonight. They will consider the
4 information you provide that is related to the proposed
5 improvement of the Columbia River Federal navigation
6 channel, specifically the Draft Supplemental Integrated
7 Feasibility Report and EIS. The Corps will then issue its
8 findings, including all of your comments, as part of the
9 final record of decision. Written and oral comments will
10 be considered equally.

11 Finally, I'd just like to cover a few
12 quick necessary details. You might have even noticed the
13 bathrooms are out in the hall to your -- to my left as you
14 go back out there. Emergency exit doors -- if you have
15 any problems, go out the way you come in.

16 Thanks for your attention and thanks
17 again for coming to share your views on the region's
18 future. I will now turn the meeting back over to Colonel
19 Hobernicht.

20 COLONEL HOBERNICHT: Tonight we are
21 here to exchange information with you about the Columbia
22 River Channel Improvement Project and take your formal
23 testimony on the project. As you are probably aware, the
24 Corps just completed revising the economic analysis for
25 the project and added several new environmental

1 restoration components. This was contained in the
2 supplemental project report we released earlier this
3 month. I'd like to point out that this is a draft report.
4 And over the 60-day comment period, we have asked you to
5 share with us your thoughts about this report. Your
6 comments are important to us and we will review them all.
7 If you have information you know or feel we have missed,
8 please let us know before September 15th so we can
9 consider it before we make this report final.

10 Around the room in the back and in the
11 hallway you'll find representatives from the states of
12 Oregon and Washington, NOAA-Fisheries, and the U.S. Fish
13 and Wildlife Services, Corps sponsors and the Corps of
14 Engineers. Please talk to the agency representatives here
15 tonight to understand how we got here today and where we
16 still need to go in the weeks and months to come.

17 In addition to the oral testimony that
18 will be captured by the court reporter, we will accept the
19 written comments, if you prepared any. Again, there is a
20 box near the door for you to place them in.

21 In addition to -- in addition to this
22 session, two more public hearings were scheduled along the
23 lower river. The first public hearing was held in
24 Vancouver on July 31st. The last hearing will be in
25 Astoria on September 10th.

1 With that, I would again like to thank
2 you for coming out here tonight. I know each of you are
3 busy and I appreciate you taking time to participate in
4 this process. I'll be here through the entire session
5 tonight. Feel free to come up and talk with me. If you
6 have a question I cannot answer, I will get you to the
7 right person who can answer that question.

8 Before we begin taking your testimony,
9 I'd like to introduce the two people seated alongside of
10 me, Laura Hicks and Marci Cook. Marci is a member of my
11 environmental resources staff and is responsible for
12 ensuring this project meets the requirement of the
13 National Environmental Policy Act. Linda is the project
14 manager for the Columbia River Channel Improvement
15 Project. She has a short presentation before we get
16 started.

17 Laura.

18 MS. HICKS: I also would like to
19 welcome you all today and we look forward to hearing your
20 testimony.

21 The brief presentation kind of brings
22 everybody up to speed. And I kind of want to just walk
23 through what this project is, what changes have been from
24 our last document in 1999 to the document that's out for
25 public review today.

1 As you all know, our project starts at
2 river mile three on the Columbia River, comes up to the
3 Portland-Vancouver area at river mile 106.5. Also
4 authorized for construction and improvement is the
5 Willamette from river mouth zero to river mouth 12. That
6 portion of the project is being deferred until all of the
7 Super Fund issues on the Willamette are resolved and the
8 government understands what the region would like to do
9 with the contaminated sediment, so that part we're not
10 taking testimony on. We're not going to proceed with that
11 part until we know what's going to happen with the Super
12 Fund clean up.

13 A brief history of where we've been
14 and then where we're going. Basically, for any Federal
15 action that the Corps undertakes, we have to receive a
16 study resolution from U.S. Congress. We got ours for this
17 project in August of 1989. With that, the Corps of
18 Engineers did what we call a reconnaissance report. We
19 took a year. We looked at whether or not there was a
20 Federal interest in pursuing further investigations. That
21 was a favorable report. We then initiated what's called a
22 feasibility study. We started that in April of 1994. We
23 produced our first draft feasibility report and EIS in
24 October of '98. That was out for public review and
25 comment. Those comments were responded to, put in a final

1 feasibility report that was also circulated for public
2 review. And then we applied for and sought coastal zone
3 management consistency and received biological opinions
4 from National Marine Fisheries Service and U.S. Fish and
5 Wildlife. We got a -- basically, a new start construction
6 authorization by Congress in December of 1999. August of
7 the following year, 2000, NMFS had new information that
8 related to endangered species in the Columbia River and
9 they had information on contaminated tissues within some
10 of the salmon. They also had information that related to
11 bathymetry and velocity and how that affected endangered
12 species. They asked us to take another look at where the
13 project was given their new information. They withdraw
14 their biological opinion. When they withdrew their
15 biological opinion while we were seeking water quality
16 certification from the two states, we received denial
17 letters. We were not issued water quality certification
18 from Oregon or Washington.

19 So then the Corps went back,
20 reinitiated consultation for endangered species in
21 September, and in January of this year, we then decided to
22 supplement the EIS that's out for review today. It's
23 important to know that it's an integrated report, so it
24 not only contains NEPA information that relates to -- to
25 all of the environmental impacts, but it also has certain

1 criteria that the Corps uses in a feasibility study. So
2 we have, then, a benefit of cost analysis that's in there
3 and all of this information was decided to be revised and
4 updated before we supplemented this report.

5 We then also decided to incorporate
6 enough information into this document to also satisfy the
7 State of Washington's SEPA, State Environmental Policy
8 Act, so that the Washington state -- Washington Department
9 of Ecology then could have -- it meets the qualifications
10 for their water quality and coastal zone management
11 consistency. Port of Longview is the lead agency for the
12 SEPA portion of the project.

13 In May of this year, then, we received
14 new biological opinions from National Marine Fisheries and
15 U.S. Fish and Wildlife. They were nonjeopardy opinions.
16 And so we then put all of that information together. It's
17 available on our website if you'd like to look at the
18 biological assessment, our amendment to the biological
19 assessment or any of the biological opinions. Those are
20 on the Corps' website. They're also in a CD that was
21 circulated with the document.

22 We're holding -- we've held a series
23 of public meetings starting back in 1994 and we've been
24 out to numerous meetings. Each time we come out, we try
25 to go to the Portland-Vancouver area, the Longview area

1 and down to Astoria. We did that in '94, '97, '98 and
2 we're doing it again in 2002. We also conducted 17
3 environmental round table meetings through that time
4 period where we tried to solicit some of the concerns from
5 key stakeholder groups and tried to incorporate some of
6 the concerns into the project that you're currently
7 reviewing. We've had numerous resource agency meetings
8 with both State and Federal agencies that relate to
9 salinity intrusion, wildlife mitigation and ocean dredge
10 material and where to dispose of material in the ocean.

11 Okay. So this is just an overview.
12 We've already conducted an information meeting in Astoria.
13 We had a public hearing in Vancouver. We also convened a
14 technical panel that looked at the costs and benefits that
15 were revised for this report. That is open for people to
16 observe. That information is available on our website.
17 The panel will give us conclusions in a formal
18 documentation of their findings probably later this week.
19 When we receive those, that also will be posted on our
20 website. And like the Colonel has said, we're taking
21 public testimony here tonight. Tuesday we'll be in
22 Astoria taking public testimony as well. And then the
23 public comment period will end on the 15th.

24 So then quickly, it's important for
25 people to understand that this is basically a

1 multi-purpose project from the Corps' point of view and
2 we're incorporating navigation improvements as well as
3 ecosystem restoration components. And so the things --
4 the primary things that have changed since the 1999
5 document and the one that's out for public review today is
6 there's three years of additional data and analysis that
7 relate to smelt in the river. We also have three years
8 more of data on white sturgeon. We have done extensive
9 explorations in the river to look at areas that we thought
10 had basalt in them and whether or not blasting would be
11 required for the project. The rock blasting has basically
12 been reduced to only one location on the Columbia. We
13 revised the dredging quantities based on new hydrographic
14 surveys that were in December of '01 and January of '02.
15 We have additional information that relates to Dungeness
16 crab and impacts or embankment projects for this crab. We
17 have the new ESA consultation. And with that, we've added
18 six new ecosystem restoration features to the project as
19 well as the three that we had in the original project.
20 We've also included research and monitoring actions that
21 relate to watching what we do and gaining more information
22 that relates to endangered species. Then, as I've told
23 you, we revised both the costs and the benefits for the
24 entire project.

25 The major changes just, you know,

1 encapsulated, from 1999, we had 18.4 million cubic yards
2 of dredge material that we were proposing to remove from
3 the channel during the deepening construction. That now
4 is down to 14.5 million cubic yards. The basalt has been
5 reduced to 50,000 cubic yards. We once thought that there
6 was up to five different utilities that crossed the
7 Columbia that was submerged that may needed to be
8 relocated as a result of deepening the channel. The State
9 confirmed that none of those utilities will have to be
10 relocated as a result of the deepening. They're all
11 deeper than the dredging prism. And everything that the
12 Corps does, we try to be consistent nationally, so we
13 prepared what's called national economic development costs
14 and benefits and then we compare those projects across the
15 nation. And so the cost for the project under AD
16 (phonetic) analysis dropped from 154 million to almost 133
17 million.

18 And then on the benefit side, when we
19 look at the benefits that are attributable to the Federal
20 action, those also dropped. It went from 28 million
21 annual benefit to 18.3 annual benefit -- million. I'm
22 sorry. And then when you compare, then, the benefit to
23 cost ratio and you marry up the benefits and divide it by
24 the cost, we also drop from 1.9 to 1.5. The total project
25 cost -- and this would include everything that's in the

1 project, ecosystem, restoration and navigation components
2 -- those went from 160.9 million to 156.

3 Okay. So the ecosystem restoration
4 component that we added. The first three, Shillapoo Lake,
5 the tide box retrofits and Lord-Walker Hump fishery
6 improvement, those were included in 1999. All of these
7 other ones were added as a result of our ESA consultation.

8 Last go around when we consulted, we
9 had a term and condition and a change to the project where
10 the Corps said that we would go out and try to restore up
11 to 4500 acres of marsh habitat in the estuary independent
12 of channel deepening and using our other authorities.
13 This time when we redid the consultation, we tried to be
14 as specific as possible to identify locations, to look at
15 things in an ecosystem approach, to try to select
16 improvements and restoration projects that's hoped to
17 function, form and value for the endangered species. We
18 also tried to put an emphasis on publicly held lands so
19 that we could have assurance that those projects would be
20 able to be implemented and not have to worry about private
21 land ownership and acquiring the lands.

22 And so one of the major things that
23 happened in the project as a result of the consultation
24 was a shift from ocean disposal in the first document in
25 1999 to two restoration projects that are included within

1 the estuary. The proposal that's out for review is to take
2 the material from the lower 40 miles of the river, take it
3 to a temporary sump that's outlined there as number one --
4 that's kind of an orangish color -- and to use that as a
5 temporary sump to hold the material from the hopper
6 dredges. Then during the in-water work period, we would
7 pipeline the material from that temporary sump into the
8 Lois Island embayment and work to restore it. This
9 basically shows an aerial photography of what Lois Island
10 looks like today compared to what it was in the 1935 ^
11 CREDDP atlas. This used to be an area that was minus six
12 or zero/minus 12 depth of water and it was dug out for
13 liberty vessels during World War II. And so as a result,
14 this area, then, if you look at the 1982 CREDDP atlas, you
15 can see minus 24 depth of water/18 feet of water in this
16 area. So the proposal -- the proposal is to bring that
17 back up to what it looked like more representative of 1935
18 than what it would have looked like today.

19 So that piece would take all of the
20 construction material for the lower river. And then the
21 maintenance material that would result for the first 10
22 years after construction we're proposing to put in an area
23 that we refer to as Miller-Pillar. Pile dikes would be
24 necessary to hold the material. It's located between
25 Miller Sands Island and Pillar Rock. The goal will be to

1 create shallow water habitat. And this kind of does the
2 same comparison between 1935 and 1982, so you can see
3 where it used to have six and 12 feet of water, there's 44
4 and 18 feet of water. It's kind of an active erosion
5 area. We're also proposing to do restoration kind of in a
6 base approach, if you will, that relates to Tenasillahe
7 Island. We have interim measures and we have where we're
8 trying to reintroduce Columbian white-tailed deer. And if
9 successful in delisting those deer, we would go back and
10 do long-term measures at Tenasillahe Island.

11 One of our disposal sites is on
12 Howard-Cottonwood Island and that's shown in the yellow on
13 this map. The port is willing to buy all of the private
14 lands on the island and then allow them as part of the
15 reintroduction of Columbian white-tail deer move deer to
16 this island to try to get three distinct populations with
17 a certain amount within each to see if then the deer could
18 ultimately be delisted from the Endangered Species List.

19 If -- if that happened, what would
20 happen on Tenasillahe -- a couple steps would happen. We
21 would do a hydraulic study for the channels within
22 Tenasillahe. We would see if we could open up, first of
23 all, the tidegates that are there to allow fish passage
24 through the island. If the deer were delisted, then the
25 Corps would come back and do a long-term action where we

1 would breach the flood control dikes along the Tenasillahe
2 and then open up the whole island for fish use.

3 Another one of the restoration
4 components that was added to the project is Bachelor
5 slough. And what we would do here is first test the
6 sediments within the slough. If they tested clean, then
7 we would dredge out about three miles of the slough, take
8 that material and create riparian habitat for the places
9 we show on the map.

10 So what we're asking for today is your
11 testimony, your comments on these proposals. It would be
12 very helpful if you could try to concentrate and help us
13 with our decision making in the lower river, what to do
14 with the dredge material. The first go around we were
15 proposing deep water ocean disposal. Now we have two
16 restoration projects on the table that we're asking for
17 your comments about our beneficial use of dredge material.
18 When we receive your comments, then it will be our
19 responsibility to respond to your comments, produce a
20 final supplemental EIS feasibility report, circulate that
21 back out for public review. At the same time we're
22 actively pursuing application for water quality
23 certification in Oregon and in Washington at the same time
24 working on coastal zone management consistency
25 determination in both states as well. When the Corps

1 produces the final document, receives the certification,
2 concurs with our consistency determination, we can produce
3 our record of decision, and at that point we'd be able to
4 get in the budget -- the President's budget for some
5 construction effort. That basically concludes my
6 presentation of where we are, what our next steps are and
7 I look forward to your testimony.

8 MS. ABEL: As Laura said, this is the
9 time now to hear from all of you, so we're going to start
10 the oral testimony part. I will call your name and then
11 you'll come up to this microphone here. If you need us to
12 bring a microphone to you, we can do that, if anybody has
13 any trouble getting up to that microphone. I'll call the
14 name of the person who's up first, then who's next and
15 then who's third in line so that you'll know your turn is
16 coming up soon. Please be ready to speak.

17 The court reporter has asked me to
18 remind you to speak clearly and slowly to make her job a
19 lot easier. It's a little bit slower than maybe you'd talk
20 in normal language.

21 I've asked the Corps to help me out by
22 assigning their staff member, Ron Musser, here to help me
23 with the timing of your comments and to work under my
24 direction tonight. So here's what we're going to do:
25 When you start speaking into the microphone, he's going to

1 turn on his stopwatch that he's got for your five minutes
2 so that everybody will get the same amount of time. When
3 you get down to one minute, he's going to hold up this
4 sign. You must keep an eye over there for his little one
5 minute sign. And then when your time is up, he's going to
6 hold up a second sign that will ask you to please conclude
7 your comments. Go ahead and finish your thoughts, you
8 know, finish what you're saying, and then stop so the next
9 person and the next up, one of your neighbors, will be
10 able to come up and speak and have their five minutes too.
11 I'll also be keeping an eye on the time to make sure we
12 can get everybody heard and also be giving my attention to
13 your testimony.

14 At the end of your time, please leave
15 the microphone so the next speaker may begin. It looks
16 like we ought to be able to make sure that everybody who
17 signed up can speak tonight, but we'll need your help in
18 moving that along. Please, when you come up to the
19 microphone, please state your name and spell your last
20 name so we get that in the record. Please state the name
21 of your organization or agency, if you're with one. Then
22 direct your comments to Colonel Hobernicht and the rest of
23 the panel because they are here to hear you tonight. I'm
24 going to call the first speakers and, as a courtesy, as I
25 mentioned in the opening remarks and the ground rules, we

1 will have elected public officials go first, if they wish
2 to speak, and my understanding is we do have some with us
3 tonight, so let me call their names. Bill Lehning,
4 Cowlitz County Commissioner; Dan Buell, Port of Longview;
5 Walt Barnum, also Port of Longview, but I believe Walt may
6 not want to speak. He may just want to be acknowledged.
7 Why don't I have the three of you stand up and the first
8 two can come up to the microphone.

9 Do we have any other public officials?
10 I'd like the public officials tonight.

11 Wow, okay. What I'm going to do while
12 we hear our first speaker, then, is I'm going to come back
13 and get your names as well so that we can get you in the
14 line of speaking.

15 MR. LEHNING: Good evening Colonel,
16 Corps staff. My name is Bill Lehning, L-e-h-n-i-n-g. I'm
17 a Cowlitz County Commissioner and I felt the testimony was
18 so important to be here tonight, I left a meeting in
19 Vancouver to get here so that I can talk to you for a few
20 minutes.

21 I appreciate the environmental impact
22 studies that you've been doing and I think that you've
23 addressed them very well. I would, though, like to talk
24 about how this whole project is going to effect Cowlitz
25 County. Our unemployment in Cowlitz County is the largest

1 on the I-5 corridor. We are in desperate need of jobs.
2 Cowlitz County has three ports located within our
3 boundaries. The County has gone to the State and secured
4 over \$20 million to increase the infrastructure in our
5 county to get jobs in the community. We have, working
6 with the ports, put in a rail spur into the Port of
7 Woodland and into the Port of Longview. We've helped to
8 establish a bridge into the area of the Port of Kalama.
9 We've also helped to build some roads into the port so
10 that we could have infrastructure so that the shipping
11 lines could locate here. We are very fortunate in Cowlitz
12 County to have the I-5 corridor, the rail and an airport
13 all here without congestion of the big cities like Tacoma
14 and Seattle. We have property that is available for
15 industry to bring family wage jobs to this community. It
16 is very, very important that we deepen the channel to the
17 point where the shipping lines will not bypass Cowlitz
18 County and Southwest Washington and North Oregon because
19 they can't load their ships. We are not talking about
20 dredging the entire Columbia River. We're just talking
21 about taking off some peaks in different areas so that
22 those ships can be filled. When those ships leave our
23 ports only three-quarters full, millions of dollars are
24 lost to the community. You're not going to find very many
25 ports anymore that have the area that we have with the

1 infrastructure that we have and the job markets that we
2 have here in Cowlitz County.

3 I'm very concerned about the
4 environmental issues, yes. I take my boat and I fish
5 right alongside of the dredge and I catch salmon right 50
6 feet away. It is important that we do not hinder the
7 runs, but the spawning and all those take place in the
8 other streams and if we can protect that and the crab
9 beds, I think, you know, this is very important to our
10 area here. So I hope that you will seriously move forward
11 with this project. It means so much to Southwest
12 Washington. Without it, our recovery here is going to be
13 very slow. And it seems like that the Pacific Northwest
14 are the last ones to feel it but the last ones to recover.
15 And we have so much to offer right here in Cowlitz County,
16 that this dredging is vital to our economy.

17 Thank you.

18 MS. ABEL: Thank you.

19 Next we'll hear from Dan Buell and
20 then our other two elected officials, Jack Keulker and
21 Arch Miller, will be next.

22 MR. BUELL: Good evening. I'm glad to
23 be here. I don't know how this is to going to affect your
24 final document, but my name is Dan Buell, B-u-e-l-l. I'm
25 an elected Court Commissioner at the Port of Longview.

1 I've been a labor leader in this Southwest Washington for
2 15 years. I want my job, so it's a big thing for us. We
3 have 15,000 union members living in Cowlitz County and we
4 know that 40,000 jobs are dependent on the Columbia River
5 maritime economy, not just here but all the way up the
6 river. So I'm here mostly speaking for jobs. We're all
7 concerned about the environment. We not -- we don't want
8 the channel deepened at any cost. We don't want to end up
9 like China with whatever goes on over there with the
10 pollution and everything else. We just -- if it's
11 practical and it can bring jobs to Southwest Washington
12 and the Columbia River, that's what we'd like to see.

13 As Bill says, we are a depressed area,
14 22 percent unemployed. You're going to get -- from the
15 State, you'll hear 11, but there are so many people that
16 have run out of unemployment that you can almost double
17 it. Maybe I exaggerate. We must have the channel
18 deepened to sustain our trade based economy and to have
19 jobs for our children.

20 Thank you very much.

21 MS. ABEL: Jack Keulker and then Arch
22 Miller.

23 MR. KEULKER: Good evening. My name
24 is Jack Keulker, City of Kelso Council. And tonight I'm
25 representing the Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments

1 for both Cowlitz and Wahkiakum County. I have a letter
2 I'd like to read into the record and then I have an
3 attached letter which I would like to present you with
4 this letter from the Kelso -- Cowlitz Council of
5 Governments.

6 "To Colonel Richard Hobernicht,
7 Commander, September 5th, 2002.

8 As you are aware, concerns have been
9 expressed by the Wahkiakum County and the lower river
10 ports and the communities as to the potential impact of
11 the channel deepening project and the effects of the
12 existing navigation channel and shipping activities.
13 These concerns and impacts to the lower river ports and
14 communities need to be addressed. Among these are
15 ensuring that the erosion damage to Puget Island -- which
16 I have two daughters that live there and which I'm very
17 much aware of the erosion over the last 52 years. Every
18 time the river is dredged for maintenance, you can see the
19 erosion and we'd like to make sure this is strongly
20 addressed, as well as all the tributaries and the streams
21 up and down Wahkiakum County and Pacific County and
22 Cowlitz County. The -- Wahkiakum County and the lower
23 river ports have not been idle waiting for a rescue. They
24 have taken initiative to coordinate the examination of
25 environmental situations in the lower river and are

1 identifying various needs and projects that should be
2 pursued if and when the channel projects move ahead. The
3 Columbia River Channel Coalition, through its board
4 members and staff, have worked -- are working very hard
5 with the lower river group to address their concerns on
6 how to solve some long ignored issues noted above.

7 "Now, the channel deepening project is
8 at a critical stage of moving ahead. Now more than ever
9 we stress its importance to the shaky region economy and
10 the fact that positive steps are under way to resolve the
11 impacts to the Lower Columbia region. The lower -- the
12 Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments at its meeting on
13 August 22nd once again discussed the project, the status,
14 its positive impact and the concerns of the lower river
15 groups and communities. Our conclusion: We urge the
16 Corps of Engineers to proceed with the project, implement
17 the mitigation measures to resolve the project related
18 issues in the lower river.

19 Again, thank you for making available
20 this opportunity."

21 And this is signed by Bill Lehning,
22 Chairman of the Cowlitz-Wahkaikum Council of Governments
23 and myself, who is Vice-Chair, who is representing the
24 Kelso Council of Government. And, again, I urge you to
25 please think of the 2500 citizens down there in Wahkiakum

1 County. They may be small, but they're mighty. And
2 they've been meeting with this project for the last two or
3 three years. They desperately need your attention and they
4 need your urgency on this project. We need to make sure
5 that the streams and the erosion banks, whatever, are
6 taken care of for those people. So we'd appreciate if you
7 would pay attention, listen to those people, and follow
8 through and see what we can do to help them.

9 Thank you.

10 MS. ABEL: Thank you.

11 Next, Arch Miller.

12 MR. MILLER: Good evening, ladies and
13 gentlemen, Colonel, staff. My name is Arch Miller. I
14 reside at 107 South Santa Fe Court in Vancouver,
15 Washington. That's in the USA. I'm a Commissioner at the
16 Port of Vancouver, a position I've had the pleasure of
17 holding since 1990. As a matter of fact, I was elected
18 about two months after this project started in the fall of
19 1989.

20 Very recently, the Port of Vancouver
21 welcomed a new ship on her maiden voyage. She was
22 christened the MV Adriatica Graeca. She was built in
23 Japan and sailed empty to the Port of Vancouver for the
24 purpose of transporting wheat to Indonesia. She slipped
25 up the Columbia River shiny and new with a proud crew and

1 a crew of longshoremen waiting to load her with her
2 initial cargo. She berthed at the Harvest States grain
3 elevator at the Port of Vancouver and began taking on
4 wheat, wheat from Eastern Oregon, Eastern Washington,
5 Idaho, Montana, and other inland points.

6 After nearly a day of loading, she
7 departed the Port of Vancouver but without a full load.
8 Capable of handling 70,000 tons of wheat, she left with
9 only 56,000 tons, which was the maximum load due to draft
10 restrictions on the Columbia River. 14,000 tons short of
11 a full load, only 80 percent loaded. While this does not
12 occur with every ship, it is becoming a more and more
13 common occurrence as new ships enter the market.

14 Thank you for providing an opportunity
15 for public comment on the Draft Supplemental Feasibility
16 Report and the Environmental Impact Statement for the
17 Columbia River channel deepening project, which is vitally
18 important to the economic and environmental health of our
19 region. Deepening the Columbia River navigation channel is
20 critical to maintaining maritime commerce and critical to
21 sustain businesses, farms and jobs in our region. This
22 project will ensure that the Columbia River can
23 accommodate the larger, more fuel efficient ships that
24 increasingly dominate the world trade fleet. With the
25 completion of the biological opinions by the National

1 Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife
2 Service and the completion of these Draft Supplemental
3 reports, it is clear that this project can move forward in
4 an economical and environmental responsible manner.

5 At the Port of Vancouver, nearly 5,500
6 jobs are directly tied to maritime and industrial
7 activities. Port workers earned \$242 million in wages
8 last year. Their purchases add another \$124 million to
9 our local economy and the goods and services they buy help
10 to support other jobs in our community. Overall, Columbia
11 River maritime commerce produces family wage jobs for over
12 40,000 people and influences another 59,000 jobs in the
13 Northwest. Last year marine activity in the Columbia
14 River created \$1.8 billion in personal income. Jobs and
15 businesses in our region require access to cost effective
16 maritime transportation. The future of the Columbia River
17 navigation is directly dependent on deepening the channel
18 an additional three feet. This will not only maintain our
19 shipping transportation routes, but will ensure our
20 region's trade based economy. Approximately -- tough to
21 get a real number on this, but approximately 35 percent of
22 all jobs in Clark County are trade-related jobs.

23 I thank you very much for your time.

24 MS. ABEL: Thank you.

25 Are there any other public elected

1 officials that would like to speak?

2 Okay. Let me call the next three
3 names, then. Chris Hatzi will be up next, then Eric
4 Johnson, then Ken O'Hollaren.

5 MR. HATZI: Good evening. My name is
6 Chris Hatzi. The last name is spelled H-a-t-z-i. I'm
7 President of the Columbia River Port Rejuvenation. We're
8 a nonprofit organization of regional businesses, business
9 associations, labor and citizens that are committed to
10 improving an international market access for the region.

11 Thank you for the opportunity for
12 public comment on the Draft Supplemental Feasibility
13 Report and EIS for the Columbia River channel deepening
14 project. This project is vitally important to the
15 economic and environmental health of the region. This
16 evening I will talk about the importance of channel
17 deepening to the regional economy and briefly about what
18 some of the environmental issues are.

19 Cost effective maritime transportation
20 is vital to sustaining and strengthening our regional
21 trade based economy, especially during these difficult
22 economic times. Deepening the Columbia River navigation
23 channel is critical to maintaining maritime commerce and
24 to sustain businesses, farms and jobs in our region. This
25 project will ensure that the Columbia River can

1 accommodate the larger fuel efficient ships that
2 increasingly dominate the world fleet. From the Tri
3 Cities to Lewiston to Klammath Falls, this project has a
4 broad base support from businesses, labor unions, farmers
5 and the ports. As previously stated, over 40,000 local
6 family wage jobs are dependent on and another 59,000
7 Northwest jobs are influenced by Columbia River maritime
8 commerce. Due largely to delays in channel deepening, the
9 longshore job losses on the Columbia River have
10 accelerated over the last five years. These job losses
11 have taken \$16 million out of the regional economy. With
12 the Pacific Northwest leading the nation in unemployment,
13 we cannot afford to lose any more jobs. More than 1,000
14 businesses rely on the Columbia River to transport their
15 products to and from world markets. Vitality of these
16 jobs and businesses require access to cost effective
17 maritime transportation. The future success of the
18 Columbia River navigation is directly dependent on
19 deepening the channel from 40 to 43 feet to maintain the
20 vitality of this transportation route and our regions's
21 trade based economy. As the supplemental report explains,
22 the benefit to cost ratio for this project remains strong.
23 Even more importantly, Northwest businesses and farms will
24 gain major regional economic benefits from this project
25 that cannot be included in the Corps' analysis. Let me

1 cite one example of how insufficient market access has
2 negatively impacted the economy and potentially the
3 environment.

4 Grass seed farmers in the Willamette
5 Valley have struggled for years to draw an environmentally
6 sound method of eliminating the grass straw that is left
7 over after harvesting the seed. Recently, innovative
8 commodity trading companies such as S.L. Folen (phonetic)
9 have sold a variety of different forage products to the
10 Japanese dairy industries, including grass straw. During
11 the last two years, the Columbia River lost 25 percent of
12 the direct hauling container carrier service. The
13 carriers that left cited channel depth as one of the major
14 reasons they discontinued service. As a result of this
15 loss, capacity of the Columbia River container freight
16 rates have increased by 150 to \$300 per container. With
17 increasing freight rates from the Columbia River, the very
18 low valued grass straw is having much more difficult time
19 competing in the marketplace with low cost forage products
20 such as rice straw from Thailand, China and Australia. If
21 the grass straw can't be sold in international markets,
22 some have suggested the only alternative is to go back to
23 large scale field burning or dumping grass straw in
24 landfills.

25 Channel deepening is also important

1 for our environment. This project will require dredging
2 just 54 percent of the channel or 3.5 percent of the total
3 Columbia River between the mouth and the
4 Portland-Vancouver area. The remaining areas in the
5 channel are already naturally deeper than point -- 43
6 feet.

7 I will leave the specifics of the
8 environmental debate to the experts. However, I would
9 urge you to consider the environmental impact of not
10 dredging. Ships are the most environmentally friendly
11 method of moving goods between two points. By ensuring
12 that we have sufficient ocean carrier service in the
13 Columbia River, there will be less need to truck or rail
14 goods to or from California or Puget Sound ports. Fewer
15 trucks and trains mean lower emissions and improved air
16 quality.

17 Thank you.

18 MS. ABEL: Thank you.

19 Next we'll hear from Eric Johnson,
20 then Ken O'Hollaren, then Kent Martin.

21 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you very much.

22 My name is Eric Johnson and I work
23 with the Washington Public Ports Association, which is the
24 steamway trade association representing Portland -- 76
25 Portland districts throughout Puget Sound here in

1 Southwest Washington as well as Puget Sound and Eastern
2 Washington. And I have just three brief points to make
3 tonight.

4 My first point is that support for
5 this project extends way beyond the co-sponsoring ports
6 and the immediate Columbia River communities that you've
7 heard from tonight. Four of the members of our
8 association are co-sponsors of this effort and it's, of
9 course, no surprise to you that we support it as well.
10 But what is often not appreciated is the depth of
11 statewide support for this project. Farming and business
12 communities all throughout the inland Northwest need a
13 deeper shipping channel through this waterway. Thousands
14 of well paying jobs need this project. Everyone has
15 learned about how the ecosystem and the environment are
16 all linked together in one big web and we've all learned
17 about how damage to one part invisibly leads to damage to
18 another part of the ecosystem. But this model is also
19 true of our economic system. Trade jobs by nature are
20 linked together. And when they go away, the invisible
21 threads go away that link them together and we're all
22 damaged. And a lot of the families and the businesses and
23 the working people that depend on this river don't live
24 anywhere near here, but they know they need this river
25 deepened and that's why a representative of the State

1 legislature drove down here tonight to support this
2 project.

3 Which leads me to my second point. I
4 mentioned the ecosystems and the environment. And my
5 second point is that this project offers a lot of
6 environmental benefits and it improves fish habitat. A
7 lot of the opposition to this project or concern about
8 this project has come from people who are worried about
9 the environmental impacts of it. They're mostly worried
10 about salmon. The ports are worried about salmon too. We
11 have a lot of ports who have fishing fleets and we have no
12 interest in a project that hurts fish. But the resource
13 agencies and the independent panel that have studied this
14 have all concluded that this project does not harm those
15 endangered species. And the ports who took on the co-
16 sponsorship of this project have worked very, very hard to
17 make sure that the environmental aspects of the project
18 were improved. We've had years of review and hundreds of
19 hours of meetings and thousands of pages of study and it's
20 been good work because, as you saw tonight in the
21 presentation, we've eliminated ocean disposal, we've
22 decreased the amount of dredging dramatically, we
23 decreased the amount of basalt blasting dramatically,
24 we've greatly increased the beneficial uses of the dredge
25 material for beach nourishment and for habitat

1 restoration. And those new habitat restoration and
2 enhancement features are a significant benefit, I think,
3 to the fish and birds and the wildlife that we share this
4 river with. And I also want to note the efforts -- the
5 strong efforts that the co-sponsor ports have gone to to
6 work with and address the important concerns of the lower
7 river ports, the smaller ports down in the estuary.
8 They've worked hard to address those important concerns
9 and they're to be commended for it.

10 Now, it's easy in this world to assume
11 that because a project is big, it must be environmentally
12 bad. But this project has worked hard to make sure that
13 because it is big, its habitat restoration efforts are
14 also big. And big doesn't have to be bad. And in this
15 case, I would argue that the biggest part of this project
16 is the big opportunity that it presents to help both
17 working people and fish.

18 My final point is brief. Let's quit
19 talking and start dredging. Some people are saying that
20 this study needs -- that this project needs more study and
21 more time. I had this job -- I've had this job for 15
22 years. I remember when we started this project when
23 Congress authorized this study 13 years ago. But
24 additional studies aren't going to change the peer
25 reviewed conclusions about the benefits of this project

1 for our communities and for our region and for the nation.
2 This project is a good deal for workers. It's a good deal
3 for businesses. It's a good deal for the environment.
4 This study has been planned -- this project has been
5 planned and studied longer than the Apollo moon project.
6 We have plenty of data and study to make decisions now.
7 Let's get going. MS. ABEL: Thank you.

8 Ken O'Hollaren, Kent Martin and then
9 Jeff Davis.

10 MR. O'HOLLAREN: Good evening. My
11 name is Ken O'Hollaren. That's O, apostrophe,
12 H-o-l-l-a-r-e-n. I'm the Executive Director of the Port
13 of Longview.

14 As one of the six sponsoring ports for
15 the channel deepening project, the Port of Longview
16 appreciates this opportunity to speak on behalf of the
17 project and particularly pleased that the Corps has chosen
18 Longview as the site for one of its three public hearings
19 on the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement. Our
20 port community is proud of our partnership with the Corps
21 and the other sponsoring ports which has produced a
22 quality work product that is the subject of this hearing
23 today. We commend the Corps for considering the
24 additional information and analyses of the issuance of
25 this supplemental report. We believe this project, as

1 presently designed, fully meets the economic and
2 environmental goals of both of Lower Columbia region and
3 the nation.

4 Our advocacy of this project comes as
5 no surprise to anyone in this community. Since the
6 commencement of the reconnaissance study in 1989, we have
7 on many occasions explained the importance of a viable
8 shipping channel not only to the Port of Longview but to
9 all of Cowlitz County. Our local industry relies on water
10 borne transportation for both the importation of raw
11 material as well as the export of finished products. The
12 economic benefits of the Columbia River navigation channel
13 to our area are obvious. Improving that channel through
14 this project only and clearly adds to those benefits.

15 What may not be as well-known is the
16 role the Washington ports have played in ensuring this
17 project meets not only Federal compliance under the
18 Endangered Species Act, but that it fulfills all state and
19 local environmental regulations. Following the denial of
20 state certifications early last year, the Port of
21 Longview, along with the ports of Kalama, Vancouver and
22 Woodland, initiated a project review process of the State
23 Environmental Policy Act and assumed lead agency status to
24 obtain various State approvals. As part of this work, the
25 ports, their consultants and appropriate agencies have

1 diligently worked at better to finding all the impacts and
2 identifying prudent measures to either reduce or mitigate
3 those impacts. As a result of over 31 meetings with the
4 agencies, a series of technical memoranda were written on
5 the key issues that were the basis of the original denial
6 letters from the states. In Volume 2 of the SEIS, you
7 will find technical memos on sand supply, consistency with
8 local critical area ordinances, wildlife and wetland
9 mitigation, dredging and disposal impacts to crab, white
10 surgeon, smelt, fish stranding and royalties to the
11 Department of Natural Resources. These are a critical
12 part of the SEIS and are the basis of the work under the
13 State Environmental Policy Act.

14 While we are still working towards the
15 issuance of the final SEIS, we are confident the
16 investment of time and resources which the ports have made
17 will result in a better project and one in which local
18 communities can know their concerns were addressed. We
19 also appreciate the time and energy invested by the
20 citizens of both Washington and Oregon in reviewing the
21 SEIS and presenting their comments. In addition to these
22 steps, the ports have supported the efforts of the
23 Columbia River Channel Coalition to find new beneficial
24 uses for dredge material for down river communities.
25 These efforts have resulted in the replenishment of the

1 Puget Island sand pit for Wahkiakum County and the
2 initiation of the Benson Beach demonstration project at
3 Fort Canby State Park which will hopefully become part of
4 a long-term solution to minimize ocean disposal and reduce
5 beach erosion along the Long Beach peninsula. We also
6 support the use of dredge material for ecosystem
7 restoration as part of this project, which not only
8 eliminates the need for ocean disposal during
9 construction, but improves fish habitat in the estuary.

10 Thirteen years of study, refinement
11 and extensive public involvement have resulted in a
12 project which meets the goals and expectations for our
13 Lower Columbia communities and needs to move forward now.
14 We encourage the Corps to finalize the supplemental report
15 so that a record of decision can be made and construction
16 started.

17 Thank you very much.

18 MS. ABEL: Thank you.

19 Kent Martin, then Jeff Davis, then
20 Lanny Cawley.

21 MR. MARTIN: Ladies and gentlemen, my
22 name is Kent Martin, M-a-r-t-i-n.

23 I just returned from the four months a
24 year or so that I spend in Alaska because of 50 years of
25 incremental "This won't hurt salmon." This is where I

1 have to go to make the bulk of my living now. I'm a
2 commercial fisherman from Skamokawa, Washington.

3 On page 6-34, the notion seems to be
4 that salmonids are not present in the water column. If
5 the depth is greater than 20 feet, then the port dredging
6 operations would not affect them. This is nothing short
7 of ludicrous. There is and has been for, perhaps, 100
8 years an entire technology of diver net fishing on the
9 Columbia complete with the elaborate snag removal
10 activities, much of it in water depths in excess of 30
11 feet. That wouldn't exist if there weren't fish there to
12 catch. Some of the best fishing is on the ebb tide at
13 depths ranging from 30 to 60 feet when fish sound to avoid
14 the swifter top current.

15 With regard to the proposed disposal
16 area in the Miller sands-Pillar rock area, this is an
17 active and very productive fishing ground that was in use
18 before the dawn of the 20th century. Fishermen who can
19 demonstrate their use of maintenance of this area of the
20 drift right should be appropriately compensated for any
21 losses that may be due to spoiled disposal.

22 Which leads to my third point. It is
23 indeed curious how the Columbia River seems to stop at
24 Longview when the need arises. It is so the Columbia
25 River and its residents of the lower 60 miles do not

1 exist. It is with this kind of blank radar screen that
2 one can talk of the proposed deepening project having no
3 significant negative economic impacts on low income
4 populations. Even a cursory review of Columbia River
5 communities below Longview indicates serious poverty
6 issues relating to fisheries dependent economies.
7 Supporting statistics are readily available and it amazes
8 me that they were left out of this study. The last half
9 of the century -- the last half century I have seen
10 communities devastated. Some of them even disappeared.
11 Names like Brookfield and Frankfort and Clifton, they're
12 just names on a map anymore because of the shortsighted
13 rush to develop the Columbia basin and the kind of
14 existential thinking that I hear. I see nothing but
15 negative values for residents of the Lower Columbia and
16 the fisheries that sustain those communities if this
17 channel deepening project is allowed to proceed based on
18 the kind of faulty and incomplete economic data that I've
19 seen here.

20 Thank you.

21 MS. ABEL: Thank you.

22 Jeff Davis, then Lanny Cawley, and
23 then Matt Van Ess.

24 MR. DAVIS: Good evening, Colonel and
25 Corps staff. My name is Jeff Davis, D-a-v-i-s, and I'm

1 here representing the 285 members of the International
2 Longshoremen Warehouse Union and the over 1400 members
3 that exist on the Columbia River. For the sake of
4 simplicity and time, I'll read a prepared statement that
5 I'll submit later.

6 The ILW supports proceeding with the
7 channel deepening project because we recognize the
8 importance of the international stake on the Columbia
9 River region. The Lower Columbia River is the second
10 largest grain export handler in the world. Over 13
11 million -- billion, pardon me -- \$13 billion in cargo
12 move over the river each year and the ILW is a significant
13 partner in handling that cargo efficiently and
14 effectively. Local 21 members here in Longview have a
15 nearly \$6 million payroll from the Kalama grain facilities
16 alone and an over \$12 million payroll all in told. These
17 figures don't include any of the ancillary jobs that are
18 also created by this movement of cargo such as truckers,
19 scalers, state grain inspectors, port staff, buyers and
20 the agents of the more than 1700 longshoremen from other
21 ports in the area. This is the most important economic
22 development in the opportunity and in the region. We see
23 the ships moving on this river and the coming generations
24 of these ships are much larger with deeper drafts. To
25 compete, these grain elevators and other shippers must be

1 able to accommodate this new generation of ships. It is
2 of vital importance to keep this existing trade that comes
3 here from eroding. And the last thing we want to see is an
4 economic back water in the area.

5 As you look forward to the future,
6 there is a need to plan for transportation and shipping to
7 be sure that we provide current and future workers with
8 the opportunity to have quality jobs. This is about more
9 than the ILWU. This is about major economic bases in our
10 community and we are committed to protecting these jobs
11 that are here on the Lower Columbia River. Thank you.

12 MS. ABEL: Thank you.

13 If the phones going off haven't
14 reminded you, you might turn your phones off for the rest
15 of the evening.

16 Next we'll hear from Lanny Cawley,
17 then Matt Vann Ess and Ted Sprague.

18 MR. CAWLEY: Thank you, Colonel,
19 Laura, Ron, others for allowing us to give testimony. My
20 name is Lanny Cawley, C-a-w-l-e-y. I am the Executive
21 Director of the Port of Kalama.

22 Port of Kalama is one of the
23 nonFederal port sponsors of the channel deepening project
24 and is so because the Port of Kalama depends on the
25 Columbia River to accomplish its mission of providing jobs

1 and enhancing the well-being of residents of the Kalama
2 port district.

3 Why is this so? The gentleman that
4 just spoke, I'd like to -- to tell him about the
5 experience that this area had in the early 1990's with the
6 spotted owl crisis when the unemployment rate went much
7 further into the 40 percent figure than it is now. The
8 port's missions during that time were to create employment
9 and the ports in this county became very active to work
10 towards creating that employment. On average, the Port of
11 Kalama provides over 1,000 family supporting jobs for
12 residents not only of Kalama and Cowlitz County but also
13 for families in greater Southwest Washington and in
14 Oregon.

15 And I thank you for this opportunity
16 to provide comment on the Draft Supplemental Feasibility
17 Report and the EIS for the Columbia River Channel
18 Deepening Project. I also have been involved with this
19 since 1989. It's been a long time. We've been very
20 patient and we believe it's time to move on with it as
21 well. I speak today representing the Board of
22 Commissioners of the Port of Kalama and the staff of the
23 Port of Kalama who have been online with the channel
24 deepening project all along and they want me to deliver
25 the message that we are very pleased with the progress the

1 Corps of Engineers has made to find alternative dredge
2 material disposal sites for the channel construction
3 project. I've made testimony in the past about supporting
4 beneficial use of sand. I've made testimony in the past
5 about the economic benefits of the channel deepening made
6 without harm done to other economies. I have made
7 testimony in regard to supporting the efforts to reduce or
8 eliminate ocean disposal for the crab fishery. And we are
9 thrilled to see that you have, in fact, eliminated ocean
10 disposal during the channel deepening project. And not
11 only will that protect the crab fishery, but you've also
12 determined to make beneficial use of that sand through
13 habitat restoration, which is very commendable and we're
14 very supportive of that.

15 The Port of Kalama knows about the use
16 of beneficial sand in the past. Ten years or more the
17 Port of Kalama has used sand to create jobs for people
18 that have been displaced by our economic woes. I'll just
19 give you one brief example and that is the steel mill that
20 we have located at the Port of Kalama. The Port of Kalama
21 took a big risk, spent about \$15 million to build a marine
22 terminal site. And the return for that risk was a
23 corporation who provides 260 jobs, \$10 million annual
24 payroll, and an increase of the tax base of approximately
25 \$1-1/2 million, I believe, in that range. Certainly, a

1 beneficial use to dredge material.

2 The Port of Kalama has also been
3 active in supporting the effort to place sand on Benson
4 Beach. We all know that it's an alternate -- one of the
5 many alternates, maybe, but it's certainly a significant
6 alternate to ocean disposal of dredge material. Many of
7 us have been involved in that and have put money into that
8 as well as the Corps. We thank the Corps for putting
9 money into that demonstration project this year.

10 Finally, I'd like to point out an
11 example that was a follow-up of one, I believe, that Arch
12 made and this is a recent one, just two weeks ago --
13 actually, it was a little bit less than two weeks -- where
14 two ships back to back at the -- excuse me -- the Port of
15 Kalama elevator owned and operated by Kalama Export. They
16 had two large vessels leave the port with grain headed for
17 Pakistan -- for both Pakistan and Afghanistan. I believe
18 those ships left with 62,000 tons, but because they didn't
19 -- they weren't able to fill because of the 40-foot draft
20 restriction, they did go up to Puget Sound to pick up
21 another load which would take their draft up at least
22 two-and-a-half feet. The operator, Steve Oaks, who has
23 also testified before would have been here to talk about
24 this tonight but wasn't able to. He wanted me to tell you
25 that the nominal value of that was probably around a

1 quarter of a million dollars. That is not an unusual
2 thing in the Port of Kalama since we have had max vessels
3 regularly call there. We need to have the channel
4 deepened and we would like to see it gotten on with.

5 Thank you very much.

6 MS. ABEL: Thank you.

7 I'm thinking that some people may be
8 having a little trouble hearing this. Let me just adjust
9 this a little bit.

10 Now, is that too loud? Is that
11 better?

12 Okay. Fine.

13 So let's hear from our next speaker,
14 Matt Vann Ess, then Ted Sprague, then Peter Huhtala. MR.
15 VAN ESS: Good evening. My name is Matt Van Ess. It's
16 V-a-n E-s-s. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

17 My name is Matt Van Ess. I'm the
18 Executive Director of CREST, the Columbia Estuary Study
19 Task Force. Crest is a council of governments representing
20 local jurisdictions, cities, counties and ports
21 surrounding the Columbia River estuary in both Oregon and
22 Washington. Again, thank you for the opportunity to
23 comment on the Draft Supplemental Integrated Feasibility
24 Report, the Environmental Impact Statement of the proposed
25 deepening of the Columbia and Lower Willamette River

1 Federal navigation channel, the deepening of six turning
2 basins of the designation of new upland, estuary and ocean
3 disposal sites, and the ecosystem restoration features,
4 including the project, those lots here.

5 At the direction of CREST council,
6 CREST staff analyzed and provided comments on the draft
7 and final EIS's and it's continued to track this proposal.
8 Based on our review of the draft and final EIS's, it was
9 CREST's finding that the project could not be done as
10 proposed without resulting in negative impacts to the
11 natural resources and the economies of the communities
12 surrounding the Columbia River estuary. CREST also found
13 that the proposed project violated local regulations,
14 State and Federal law, including NEPA, which is the Clean
15 Water Act, Coastal Zone Management Act and Endangered
16 Species Act. We were right. Coastal zone consistency and
17 water quality certifications were denied by both states
18 and the National Marine Fisheries Service withdrew their
19 biological opinion. The project was simply denied, the
20 necessary approvals to move forward. End of EIS process.
21 End of project. Well, sometimes no is just -- doesn't
22 mean no, does it?

23 CREST's initial findings also found
24 accumulative estuarine impacts will result from the
25 project, specifically cumulative impacts to Dungeness

1 crab, smelt, sturgeon, salmonids, the estuarine food web
2 and shoreline habitat. These impacts must be avoided and,
3 if unavoidable, may give.

4 So that was then. So what has changed
5 since the project was denied? Reconsultation effort was
6 conducted by the project sponsors, the Corps and the
7 services. The outcome: From a lower river community
8 standpoint, the project is now worse. The bottom line is
9 we have a serious map problem when it comes to dredging
10 and disposing. The current practices on the river and the
11 planning leading up to this point has left us in a
12 situation where we don't have capacity, we don't have
13 acceptable places or uses for the material, even for
14 maintenance of the existing channel of the project -- at
15 the mouth of the Columbia River project, much less
16 deepening. Ocean disposal has not been eliminated. We
17 avoided ocean disposal for maybe a few years depending on
18 the outcome of this supplemental process, but it's still
19 part of the project. I just wanted to say that a lot
20 earlier this evening. I just wanted to make that clear.
21 Ocean disposal has not been eliminated.

22 Our research shows that Rice Island
23 and Site E for the ocean disposal site at the mouth of the
24 river are the largest dredge material disposal sites in
25 the history of dredging the Columbia. Rice Island is

1 reaching capacity and Site E has its own suite of
2 environmental and safety issues that must be addressed
3 before continued use. Rice Island is reaching capacity.
4 It's something we really need to address. There is no
5 long-term solution for this problem. The result is that
6 we get estuary dump sites that have not been used for
7 disposal previously. Now they're ecosystem restoration.

8 CREST is working with the ports, with
9 the Corps, State agencies and other stakeholders and both
10 governors' offices on expanding the concept of beneficial
11 uses of dredge material. This is a concept that everyone
12 supports -- we've heard that tonight -- and we appreciate
13 the hard work that it's taken by everyone involved to get
14 projects like Benson Beach, the Puget Island sand pit and
15 the Bradwood commercial reuse site off the ground this
16 summer. We've got a lot more to do in this area, a lot
17 more to do. There's no funding for Benson Beach next
18 year. It's my understanding we don't have funding to
19 continue that project.

20 We also support -- CREST also supports
21 the potential to use dredge material for the purposes of
22 restoring habitat. Unfortunately, the two projects
23 presented involved dumping and their labeled restoration
24 will result in permanent alteration for the degradation of
25 the estuary. CREST has stated in early forums that

1 beneficial uses such as restoration needs to be further
2 explored on an experimental basis with a strong monitoring
3 component similar to the Benson Beach project that was
4 conducted this summer. Millions of cubic yards dumped
5 over two years during construction at Lois Island
6 embayment is not experimental. It's not restoring
7 valuable habitat. In fact, it's creating shallow water --
8 by creating shallow water, the Corps is proposing to
9 create the one habitat type that has actually grown in the
10 past century. We have over 4,000 acres of shallow water
11 than we did a decade ago -- or a century ago. So we have
12 an excess of a habitat type that we're creating.

13 What else has changed? Well, the --

14 MS. ABEL: Mr. Van Ess, you'll need to
15 conclude.

16 MR. VAN ESS: Has it really been five
17 minutes?

18 MS. ABEL: Yes.

19 MR. VAN ESS: Wow.

20 What else has changed? The Willamette
21 River's fate. Actually deepening the Willamette is still
22 preauthorized. We need to deal with that. We need this
23 preauthorization changed. Sediment volumes have changed.
24 Again, we have a math problem. Adapted management is part
25 of the process now. CREST is going to request now and

1 will be requesting during our DOC (phonetic) and DOE
2 (phonetic) comments on water quality certification that
3 the State agencies be equally involved in any proposed
4 adaptive management framework that is used to attempt
5 project approval.

6 MS. ABEL: Thank you, Mr. Van Ess.

7 MR. VAN ESS: Thank you.

8 MS. ABEL: Can you submit your written
9 notes?

10 MR. VAN ESS: I'll be submitting my
11 written comments. Thank you.

12 MS. ABEL: Thank you very much.

13 Ted Sprague and then Peter Hulitala,
14 and then I have someone whose first name I can't read.
15 The last name is Rogers. You were 12th on the sign-up
16 list. Let's see who that is.

17 Go right ahead, Mr. Sprague. MR.

18 SPRAGUE: Good evening. I'm Ted Sprague. I'm the -- oh,
19 sorry. S-p-r-a-g-u-e. I'm the President of Cowlitz
20 Economic Development Council and I appreciate the
21 opportunity to comment tonight. I also appreciate the
22 work that you've done in finding solutions for this
23 economic issue and also for the environmental issues that
24 you faced on this project. At the Cowlitz Economic
25 Development Council, I represent over 200 members that are

1 private members. We are not for profit group and we've
2 been in existence since 1979.

3 Unfortunately, Southwest Washington
4 has been leading the area, the country in unemployment for
5 the past two years. Washington and Oregon itself have
6 been number one and number two in the United States in
7 unemployment for the past 10 consecutive months. We look
8 to probably retain those titles of number one and two in
9 this coming month. It's not a race we want to finish
10 first in, but, unfortunately, we have been. I look at
11 this project as a job retention project. Additionally,
12 Cowlitz County alone has lost over 4,000 jobs in the past
13 two years. Leading the way with Longview Aluminum, we've
14 lost 950 high paying jobs in that firm alone. The current
15 unemployment rate over 10 percent. And one of the things
16 that is so important -- it's been mentioned earlier -- is
17 the thousands upon thousands of jobs that are not only
18 directly related to the Columbia River maritime trade, but
19 also those that are indirectly related to the trade. I
20 won't go into those. You heard that already.

21 Additionally, I recently returned from
22 a trade mission to Japan and Korea with Governor Lock in
23 which we heard again and again the importance of import
24 and export trade to the states of Washington and Oregon,
25 specifically into Washington. That is only going to

1 increase in its importance. And if we do not get on the
2 channel deepening project, we will remain stagnant and,
3 eventually, begin to fall behind in that important reign.
4 We cannot afford any additional job losses in this region.
5 We simply can't. We need to get going on this project. It
6 has been studied since 1989 and a lot of good work has
7 been done. I appreciate your work and I hope you can
8 continue on with this project in the near future.

9 Thank you.

10 MS. ABEL: Thank you.

11 Peter Hulitala, mystery person Rogers,
12 and then I think we might have another sheet coming up
13 too. If anyone is coming in that wants to speak that has
14 not signed up, you can do that over by the front door.
15 Thank you.

16 Go ahead.

17 MR. HUHTALA: Hi. My name is Peter
18 Huhtala. That's H-u-h-t-a-l-a. And I'm the Executive
19 Director of the Columbia Deepening Opposition Group.
20 Thanks for the chance to comment tonight. I want to cover
21 a couple matters and then I'll read a bit from my written
22 statement.

23 First of all, I'd like to, once again,
24 ask for a bit of extension on the comment period for a few
25 reasons. One, there hasn't been a hearing scheduled at all

1 in Portland, Oregon, specifically, and I think -- and I
2 know for a fact there's a whole lot of people in the
3 Portland area very interested in this project. There's
4 also quite a few lower river fishermen, especially some of
5 the ocean guys and salmon people that are getting back
6 from Alaska that really haven't had a chance to look at
7 the documentation and get ready to testify and I think
8 they're important. Third, there's a matter of errata that
9 was just distributed dated August 26, materials that
10 should have been included in the DEIS that weren't, and I
11 expect that the review period should be extended possibly
12 because of the late release of that material. And,
13 finally, on the -- this matter of this -- these technical
14 review panels that have looked at the Corps' costs and
15 benefits back at the beginning of August, the report from
16 the technical review panel has yet to be released and I'm
17 sure we're all waiting for that. But most important --
18 most relevant, I think, is the public should have a chance
19 to take a look at that. I think the -- on both the costs
20 and benefits. We may learn something that -- really
21 important that the public -- members of the public may
22 want to -- you know, however they really feel about the
23 project they want to share. So I suggest actually a
24 two-month extension of the comment period -- or at least
25 two months since the errata was released.

1 We've heard a bit about jobs and I
2 think I'll talk on that. I really would like to
3 understand what this project means for jobs, really,
4 because we hear these 40,000, 59,000 figures. What does
5 that really mean? And based what I read, the Corps
6 expects the same number -- pretty much the same number of
7 transits of the river whether the channel is deepened or
8 not. However, the technical review panel seemed to
9 suggest that -- the benefits of this action suggested a
10 high probability that fewer container ships would call on
11 Portland if, in fact, the channel were deepened. I'd like
12 to understand what that means. Fewer transits, I presume,
13 would reduce longshore jobs. On the other hand, we may
14 see increased tonnage because of the deeper channel and
15 maybe moving the more tonnage would increase jobs. I
16 would like to see a full analysis that, you know --
17 basically, we're all aware that thousands of jobs relate
18 to maritime progress in this river system, although almost
19 all of these jobs would not be affected by channel
20 deepening.

21 What I do know is that many jobs would
22 be lost in -- due to environmental degradation and reduced
23 fishing opportunities. When we have reduced fishing
24 opportunities -- I come from a town that's built on
25 fishing and logging. The impacts of the salmon and crab

1 fishery would not only hurt the fisheries but would reduce
2 employment in processing and supply and related services.
3 So it seems -- from where I'm standing, it seems like we
4 have a net loss of jobs should we go forward with this and
5 I'd really like that made clear and -- so that we can get
6 past the rhetoric and really come to understand what this
7 means. With that said, I'll engage in a little rhetoric.

8 Many people have worked for 10, 12, 14
9 years to make this project a reality. And -- and I think
10 most people are realizing this probably isn't going to
11 happen. Lots of good work has been done. And we can use
12 some of the -- some of the good work that's been done.
13 The Columbia will continue to be a gateway in
14 international trade. Its ports can be proud as they roll
15 with the dynamic changes of congress, but this is not the
16 river of one industry. Some love it for recreation, some
17 for its electricity, some drink the spirit of its use,
18 others just make a living pulling its fish. Welcome to a
19 paradigm shift. Americans value special places like the
20 Columbia River estuary. This is no longer the northwest
21 passage with a waterfall. It's critical habitat for
22 salmon and people alike. The projects --

23 Anyway, I'll wind this up. Again, I
24 want to speak to appreciation for the -- the support for
25 beneficial uses of dredge material and I want to continue

1 to work with the Corps in finding real useful beneficial
2 uses. I certainly don't think the Lois embayment or the
3 Miller-Pillar sites are beneficial uses whatsoever, but we
4 all have the challenge, whether this project goes forward
5 to not, to find good uses for that sand and move forward
6 in a positive manner.

7 MS. ABEL: Thank you. I apologize for
8 mispronouncing your name.

9 MR. HUHTALA: It's happened before
10 once.

11 MS. ABEL: Our next speaker is -- I
12 cannot read the first name -- Rogers. Is that person
13 here?

14 MR. ROGERS: Yes.

15 MS. ABEL: Sorry.

16 After that will be Brent Foster and
17 Paul Vik.

18 MR. ROGERS: Do you want me to spell
19 my first name?

20 MS. ABEL: At least say it for us.

21 MR. ROGERS: My name is Lonny Rogers
22 -- Captain Lonny Rogers. I'm a Columbia River pilot.

23 MS. ABEL: Thank you.

24 MR. ROGERS: I'm the Treasurer and the
25 acting Vice-president of 46 river pilots who direct the

1 ships up and down the Columbia River.

2 I'm here to speak for Captain Phil
3 Massey who would normally be here this evening. He
4 couldn't come, so they asked me to stand in for him. I'm
5 happy to do so. Most of these remarks are Phil's remarks,
6 but I added a few of my own, so bear with me.

7 First, I would like to comment on the
8 practical aspects of a deeper channel as it relates to
9 safety, efficiency and to bank effects of ship handling.
10 A deeper channel not only allows for the passage of
11 larger, more economic ships but, also, there is an
12 enhanced margin of safety for ships that presently call on
13 our ports. For example, tankers that call on Portland
14 often arrive at drafts of approximately 36 feet. This
15 provides a minimum bottom clearance on some sections of
16 the route that are approximately four feet. A 43-foot
17 channel would almost double the normal tanker bottom
18 clearance. Tanker hull design generally makes them more
19 difficult to steer with less water under them. Additional
20 water greatly improves their handling characteristics.
21 This is particularly true when two deep ships with widths
22 of over 100 feet are meeting in a 600-foot wide channel.
23 The hydrodynamic effects created between two ships can be
24 extreme and a deeper channel will greatly reduce those
25 hazards. Simply put, the more water, the more safety and,

1 therefore, the less chance of casualty to the vessel and
2 to the environment.

3 A deeper channel will stop the slide
4 of Columbia River ports into second class port states
5 which may have been brought on by years of channel
6 deepening wrangling. Second class ports get a diet of
7 second class ships, older, less reliable, more polluting
8 and poor weight characteristics. We have a terrific
9 safety record on the Columbia River, but the ship that
10 lost power and steering and crashed into the new dock at
11 Kalama was an old tramper on its last legs. We know that
12 older, less efficient container ships and car carrier ship
13 hulls can create more weight problems and that more modern
14 ships generally avoid this by improved hull design. We
15 know that older ships generally have less efficient
16 engines which tend to pollute the air at higher rates than
17 more modern ships. We prefer not to have these obsolete
18 ships making the bulk of our ship traffic.

19 To those of us who are concerned about
20 bank erosion, the fact is that larger ships don't
21 necessarily cause or increase bank erosion. Long time
22 observers should know that most bank problems are due to
23 the relentless effects of the river due to high water
24 periods and the tides more than the momentary effects of a
25 passing ship. However, in places where ship passage is

1 exacerbated, the natural erosion, newer ships will be an
2 improvement. Because of fuel costs and the need for
3 quicker transits, ship owners have concentrated on
4 building ship hulls which are more slippery and more
5 efficient. Those improvements greatly reduce the
6 displacement swells which we all find so objectionable.

7 Second, as the Columbia River
8 demonstrates to the world that it is truly open for
9 business, just remember the fact that the most efficient
10 way to move cargo, especially bulk cargo, is to and from
11 the furthest inland point of distribution possible. It is
12 because of the inland ports of the Columbia River provide
13 that uniqueness -- that is, the head waters of deep draft
14 commercial navigation -- that we are here tonight. We
15 must make the best use of this opportunity to remain
16 environmentally and economically healthy. A strong
17 commitment by you will not only enhance our infrastructure
18 but also our communities. We must continue to invest --
19 I'm sorry. We must continue to invest in our future by
20 attracting these new state of the art ships -- state of
21 art ships. I respectfully submit full ahead. Thank you.

22 MS. ABEL: Thank you.

23 Next we have Brent Foster, Paul Vik
24 and then I believe it's Vinton Ericksen.

25 Go right ahead.

1 MR. FOSTER: Good evening. My name is
2 Brent Foster. I'm an attorney with Columbia River Keeper.
3 Thank you for the opportunity to speak tonight.

4 Columbia River Keeper has a number of
5 significant concerns about the proposed dredging project
6 and more specifically about the supplemental EIS. We're
7 concerned because this project would basically strip mine
8 a river that's already struggling to maintain many of its
9 native species at mere survival levels. At a time when
10 massive restoration is needed, when massive improvements
11 in water quality are needed, this project would appear to
12 continue a history of degradation. We appreciate the
13 restoration projects. We appreciate the fact that these
14 have entered into the project proposal. But we're
15 concerned that in light of the Corps' history of managing
16 the Columbia River more like a navigation highway and more
17 like an industrial powerhouse than a river, that these
18 mitigation measures are not going to compensate for the
19 impacts that this project will have either on habitat,
20 water quality or the viability of salmon. The
21 supplemental EIS does not adequately assess the effects
22 that this project is going to have on salmon or a host of
23 other native species such as the Pacific Lamprey. These
24 species are important not only now but they've been
25 important for almost 10,000 years to the humans who have

1 lived here.

2 The supplemental EIS also fails to
3 answer adequately the question of what's going to happen
4 with the decades of toxic contaminations such as PCB's and
5 other substances which get stirred up as a result of
6 dredging. These will end up in downstream communities.
7 They will be reup into the water column. They will be
8 bioaccumulated by fish, which are used by a host of people
9 who rely on fish, not only for purposes of food but as
10 well as recreation, for religious and a host of other
11 purposes. The impacts of dredge spoils in both the
12 terrestrial habitats as well as the aquatic habitats has
13 not been adequately described in meeting the requirements
14 of NEPA, the Clean Water Act or the Endangered Species
15 Act.

16 We're also fundamentally concerned
17 about the economic assumption which have gone on -- gone
18 into the -- forms the basis of this project. We're highly
19 concerned about local jobs. We're very sympathetic to
20 high unemployment rates both in Washington and Oregon and
21 we strongly support efforts that are going to maintain and
22 even expand union jobs such as the ones which are
23 responsible for working at the docks. However, there is a
24 host of people, a host of families and a host of jobs
25 which have been affected by the management and will

1 continue to be affected by the management on the Columbia
2 River. There are literally hundreds, if not thousands, of
3 fishing families which today continue to exist upon with
4 the assistance of the federal government and through
5 welfare, food stamps, you name it, because of the result
6 of the crashing of the Columbia River salmon, which can
7 be, in many ways, directly attributed to the action past
8 and continuing of the Corps of Engineers. Tribal members
9 have been unable to carry out some of their most basic
10 rituals which surround -- which surround and are based on
11 salmon because of the loss of salmon which has been, in
12 many ways, caused by not only -- not only Corps damn
13 management activity but also just the running of the river
14 for navigation.

15 Because of the string of reports from
16 across the country that have raised serious questions as
17 to how the Corps performs its cost benefit analysis and
18 even the re -- we appreciate the reanalysis of the cost
19 benefit numbers that have been released as a part of this
20 EIS. However, we think that an independent cost benefit
21 analysis would be highly beneficial and is important not
22 just to justify this project but in order for the Corps to
23 regain credibility that it has lost not only in Congress
24 but throughout the country.

25 This supplemental EIS is also flawed

1 because of its failure to adequately evaluate the indirect
2 and accumulative effects from exotic species that are a
3 well-known and well-recognized and significant indirect
4 effect from shipping. Despite countless invasions by
5 ballast water, some of them extremely dramatic in the
6 Great Lakes, San Francisco and elsewhere, there's still no
7 effort in the Columbia River to even have a team or an
8 effort that will quickly respond to treat and control an
9 exotic species invasion if it occurred today. If the
10 zebra mussels came in today, there's still no detailed
11 plan. There's no funding in place to actively address
12 such a threat. The EIS should fully address adverse
13 environmental effects that are going to result from
14 bringing bigger ships in that can carry more ballast water
15 and discharge even more ballast water than is currently
16 being discharged into the Columbia. Because of these
17 concerns and many others that are addressed in our
18 comments, we still don't believe this project -- we don't
19 believe this project complies with NEPA, the Clean Water
20 Act, Coastal Zone Management, ESA, and a host of other
21 State and Federal statutes. Equally important is we
22 simply don't believe that there's the evidence to show at
23 this point that the project is worth either the
24 environmental or economic costs.

25 Thank you for your time.

1 MS. ABEL: Thank you.

2 Paul Vik, Vinton Ericksen and Warren
3 Banks.

4 MR. VIK: My name is Paul Vik, last
5 name V-i-k. I'm a resident of Puget Island. 57 years I've
6 lived there. I live on a waterfront lot on East Sunny
7 Sands, what used to be your disposal site, river mile
8 43.8. This is a piece of property that -- a piece of a
9 farm that my granddad purchased in 1913 and before the
10 island was diked. I also owned 15 acres of the Vik
11 property that you have your eye on for upland disposal
12 site.

13 Over the years, I have seen a number
14 of problems with ship wakes, erosion, damage to moorage
15 facilities, that kind of thing. And there has been
16 difficulty in collecting for any kind of liability on
17 these things, whether it be a catastrophic type of event
18 or it be the normal wear and tear that each ship goes by
19 and causes you 10 cents in damage. And we're told that
20 each ship is responsible -- ship owner is responsible for
21 the wake damage that the ship might cause. How do you
22 collect 10 cents from a ship owner? So then over the
23 years, we've seen beach nourishment and the land that I
24 have has been protected by beach nourishment. And the
25 Ohrberg beach property on the area on the lower end of

1 Puget Island and the river fronts on the Oregon side
2 across from us there, a little grove, those kinds of
3 places, and we have come to feel that -- that -- I know
4 that the reason that the sand was put there was not to
5 protect us, but we have felt that is a form of protection
6 and we have -- we have been happy with it. And when this
7 43-foot channel project was proposed, we thought that now
8 we're going to get sand. They're going to have to have a
9 place to put the sand. We were shocked to find out that
10 that's not part of the proposal for a number of reasons.
11 And this is what we would like to have is some sand. Not
12 every year, but maybe every five, six, eight years, ten
13 years, something like that.

14 Now, the -- Kent Martin mentions about
15 salmon in the deeper parts of the river. Kent was a year
16 ahead of me in school back in the '60's back in high
17 school. And we were yelling at our kids and among the
18 yelling at your kids, if your dad had a drift right in the
19 slim drift in the Skamokawa -- that was 90 feet deep in
20 those days -- you were at the top of the heap. But my dad
21 didn't have a drift right there.

22 So the -- another kind of amusing
23 thing I noticed in the -- in the supplemental impact
24 statement was that there will be no ocean dumping in
25 Wahkiakum County and I was certainly relieved to learn

1 that.

2 Anyway, the matter of liability is my
3 main concern. Nothing has changed in the -- in the
4 supplement. And I've written a lot of letters, been to a
5 lot of meetings, spoke at these hearings, and you've made
6 it easy because all I have to do for written comments is
7 the letters are in the computer. We'll change the dates
8 and send them in because -- the comments are still valid.

9 Thank you.

10 MS. ABEL: Thank you.

11 Vinton Erickson, Warren Banks and then
12 J. Michael Zachary.

13 MR. ERICKSON: Good evening, Colonel
14 and ladies. My name is Vinton Erickson spelled
15 E-r-i-c-k-s-o-n. I'm a farmer in Vancouver, Washington.
16 I am representing the Washington State Farm Bureau here
17 tonight. I'm also, for what it's worth, a county
18 president for Clark and Cowlitz County Farm Bureau. I'd
19 like to speak on a positive note. I think most everything
20 here has been very positive and I don't need to rehash
21 everything that's been said. A few negative words, but I
22 guess you have to have some of that.

23 I guess my major concern would be if
24 we -- and I've lived here 73 years myself in the same
25 house. I guess I haven't gone too far, though I worked

1 for Uncle Sam for a couple years during Korea time. But I
2 guess I'm very concerned, though, that transportation has
3 changed a lot over the years. In other words, the horse
4 and buggy thing to the trucks or the ships on the -- in
5 the water. And whether -- if we still stay back in the
6 horse and buggy days, we're going to go nowhere. And it's
7 very important, I think, to use the transportation that we
8 have on the Columbia River. Right now we -- you know,
9 we're losing some big ships. And it seems kind of stupid
10 to think that in the world travel today in shipping that
11 the big ships can't come in -- come in on the Columbia
12 River, which is one of the major rivers that we have on
13 the West Coast, that they can't come in and fill up
14 completely. And to think of all the extra things that have
15 to be done to go to the next port, have to go to Seattle
16 or wherever, San Francisco or wherever they have to go to,
17 you can almost relate that to a trucker going across
18 country. He could have a Tallase Ford (phonetic) or if he
19 has a big rig. He gets to the site and he comes back and
20 they say, "I can't give you a full load. You'll have to
21 go 500 miles to the south to finish it out." It's about
22 -- to me, it's a no brainer what we're trying to do. I
23 know the port has worked hard on it and I know the work
24 you folks have done is great when we can make something of
25 it. I'd like to see it go ahead. Thank you.

1 MS. ABEL: Thank you.

2 Warren Banks, then J. Michael Zachary,
3 then Allen La Tourette.

4 MR. BANKS: Good evening, Colonel and
5 members of the Corps, staff. My name is Warren Banks.
6 I'm the Executive Director of the Columbia River bar
7 pilots, an organization of 20 Columbia River bar pilots,
8 and I'm speaking on their behalf.

9 Since 1846, the Columbia River bar
10 pilots have been an integral part of the river highway
11 known as the Columbia River. The river is a key part of
12 the transportation infrastructure in the region and points
13 east. The ships have grown in size and draft. The
14 Columbia River has been deepened over the years in order
15 to maintain the economic viability of the businesses and
16 individuals who depend upon it. We are now at another
17 crossroads. In order to maintain the competitiveness of
18 the Columbia River for all its commercial users, the
19 channel must be deepened 43 feet. In our view, not to do
20 so would erode the ability of the Columbia River to offer
21 competitive transportation to its users. This would have
22 a negative economic ripple effect on the region that is
23 nearly impossible to calculate.

24 Two illustrations come readily to
25 mind. First, some ships will not -- will find it not

1 economically feasible to call on Columbia River ports as
2 they will not be able to utilize their capacities.
3 Indeed, this is happening to some extent now. And river
4 infrastructure has exhausted its nonstructural
5 alternatives. Secondly, as fewer ships call on the
6 Columbia River ports, the cost of doing so will be spread
7 out over fewer ships thus making alternative ports a more
8 competitive option.

9 Washington is the most trade dependent
10 state and Oregon ranks sixth as the most trade dependent
11 state in the country. Thousands of businesses in our
12 region rely on the Columbia River system for international
13 trade. The Columbia River is highly important to many
14 parts of Washington state, Oregon, Idaho and other states
15 as well. It is no accident that the Columbia River is the
16 number two green -- excuse me -- exporting highway in the
17 world.

18 Obviously, of concern to us is the
19 protection of the environment and ecosystems. Our job is
20 to pilot ships in a safe, efficient and reliable manner.
21 Safety includes protection of the environment. We are not
22 experts in the types of environment and ecosystem
23 discussions which have surrounded this project. However,
24 we support all efforts that would resolve all outstanding
25 environment and ecosystem issues.

1 It appears that by law, the cost
2 benefit study conducted by the Corps is conservative in
3 both costs and benefits. For example, it does not take
4 into consideration a multi-port analysis. Among other
5 things, such a study takes into account the additional
6 cost a current shipper would incur if the shipper did not
7 have access to the Columbia River highway. These benefits
8 are not in the current cost benefit analysis done by the
9 Corps. Nor does the analysis take into consideration the
10 additional cost to be borne by the shipper or recipient of
11 goods if it has to add additional days on to a schedule to
12 get a product to or from a port not on the Columbia River.

13 In summary, we view the channel
14 deepening project as critical to the continuing viability
15 of large scale maritime commerce on the river which enable
16 shippers and importers to get their goods to market in a
17 manner which allows them to be competitive.

18 Thank you for this opportunity to be
19 here tonight.

20 MS. ABEL: Thank you.

21 J. Michael Zachary, then Allen La
22 Tourrette and then Dave Hunt.

23 MR. ZACHARY: Good evening. My name
24 is Mike Zachary, Z-a-c-h-a-r-y.

25 In last week's journal "Commerce

1 Weekly," it discussed the coming of the 10,000 to 12,000
2 TVU -- that's 20-foot equivalent -- vessel coming on
3 board. While the probability of this size vessel plying
4 the Columbia is remote, the cascading effect that these
5 vessels will have in the world's container fleet will have
6 a significant impact on the ports of the Lower Columbia
7 River.

8 I've been earning my living in
9 maritime industry for more than 20 years as an engineer
10 and as a consultant. I've been directly responsible for
11 more than 62 strategic master plans for deep water ports
12 throughout the world. I've designed, constructed and
13 provided operational analysis of more than 300 maritime
14 terminals worldwide. Every one of those terminals require
15 not only road and rail access but also water access, the
16 three legs of the tripod.

17 The deepening of the Columbia should
18 be no different than the dredging required for the Port of
19 New York/New Jersey, the Port of Oakland, the Port of
20 Houston, the Port of Miami or any port in the United
21 States that is serving as a maritime facility for the
22 movement of cargo and people. The fact of the matter is
23 the fleet of container vessels and the bulk vessel fleet
24 is growing in terms of size of the vessel. As the 5,000
25 to 7,000 TVU vessels come online, they, in fact, replace

1 the smaller 3500 to 5,000 TVU vessels on the same route.
2 These vessels will, in turn, replace the smaller vessels
3 presently calling on the ports of the Lower Columbia
4 River. The same holds true for both vessels as we heard
5 about the grain. This cascading effect is with which I
6 open my comments. I also concur with the bar -- excuse me
7 -- the river pilots -- the captain's comments that if the
8 ships aren't able to cascade, you will get the second and
9 third tier level ships.

10 Point, the larger vessels require
11 deeper channels. Cargo is like water. It will flow to
12 the Port of least resistance. At this point in time, it
13 is easier for cargo to flow to Seattle, Tacoma, Oakland or
14 the San Pedro Bay ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach.
15 Both the containerized cargo increasing at an annual
16 growth rate in excess of 7 percent and containerizable
17 cargo -- that is cargo that didn't use containers in the
18 past but now does -- that's increasing at 4 or 5 percent
19 per year. It won't be long before all these ports have
20 reached a capacity and the least resistible path will be
21 the Columbia River.

22 A good example: What's happening in
23 the Port of New York and New Jersey and the Port of Long
24 Beach? They're going to spend more than \$2 billion to
25 raise two bridges to do nothing more than allow the bigger

1 vessels transit their ports. As taxpayers, that's your
2 money and it's my money. I would just as soon see my tax
3 dollars spent here at home to protect my ports from
4 becoming obsolete.

5 Another good example, the Port of San
6 Francisco was in the early 1970's the largest container
7 port on the West Coast. In 1998, it did not move one
8 single loaded container. Two of the three legs of the
9 tripod, the highway and rail access legs, were deemed
10 inadequate by the maritime community and the port couldn't
11 do anything and the cargo disappeared. Please, don't let
12 that happen to the water access leg to the Lower Columbia
13 ports. Without that access, needing a deeper channel, the
14 cargo that moves to the Lower Columbia will go elsewhere
15 and our ports will die.

16 Thank you.

17 MS. ABEL: We only have two more
18 people left to speak, so we're going to go ahead and
19 complete that.

20 Allen La Tourette and then Dave hunt.

21 MR. LA TOURETTE: Hello. My name is
22 Allen La Tourette, L-a T-o-u-r-r-e-t-t-e, and I represent
23 Steelscape. We're located on the north Port of Kalama.
24 It's been mentioned a few times -- Mike -- that's the one
25 where the ship crashed into the dock there.

1 Some of the comments earlier by the
2 river pilots representative and Mr. Sprague, Steelscape
3 and myself, we support the deepening of the channel and
4 for the various reasons. One, we do care about our
5 people, our community, environment and, utmost, we pride
6 ourselves on safety. And I've been aboard a few of these
7 older ships and, believe me, they're not very safe. And
8 we talked about some of the environmental impacts should
9 something go awry at the wrong time in one of those
10 vessels. I think the environmental impact would be far
11 greater than anything that we can imagine and the risks
12 are very great there. The newer ships definitely are
13 safer, more efficient. It's going to be vital to the
14 future of the economy here 10, 15 years down the road as
15 these older ships are retired. We won't have any other
16 options but to provide for these larger ships to come
17 through and that's -- the trickle down economy is just
18 tremendous.

19 We recently purchased a facility in
20 the bay area in Richmond, California and we operate
21 another facility out of Rancho Cucamonga in Southern
22 California. I'm the transportation manager and I have to
23 deal with moving product in and out of those facilities
24 and infrastructures to support the shipping is reaching
25 capacity there. This is a prime opportunity and a local

1 community that can support that and we can take advantage
2 of it. And as long as we can do that and minimize any
3 negative impacts, we're in support of it.

4 That's all I have. Thanks. MS. ABEL:
5 Thank you. Dave Hunt.

6 MR. HUNT: My name is Dave Hunt. I
7 serve as the Executive Director of the Columbia River
8 Channel Coalition and I have a letter that was passed on
9 to us by someone who couldn't be here tonight, the
10 President of the Washington State Labor Council. I'll
11 just read part of that and then I'll submit the full thing
12 into the record for your use. It's from Rick Bender, the
13 President of the Washington State Labor Council.

14 "On behalf of the Washington State
15 Labor Council and its 450,000 affiliated union members, I
16 want to thank you for providing this opportunity to
17 comment on the Draft Supplemental Feasibility Report and
18 EIS for the Columbia River channel deepening project.
19 It's vitally important to the economic and environmental
20 health of our region. At this point it is clear that this
21 project can and should move forward in order to benefit
22 the Columbia River's economy and environment. The
23 Columbia River navigation channel must be deepened in
24 order to maintain the vitality of the transportation route
25 and our region's trade based economy particularly during

1 these difficult economic times. This project has broad
2 base support from labor unions. Over 40,000 local family
3 wage jobs are dependent on and another 59,000 Northwest
4 jobs are positively influenced by Columbia River maritime
5 commerce. I urge you to complete the necessary steps to
6 insure that the Columbia River channel deepening project
7 moves forward so that we all may begin to realize the
8 benefits of its completion."

9 Since the card is not up, though, I
10 thought I also might take this opportunity to really
11 clarify several issues on the public record that have come
12 up tonight because I think it's important that we have
13 clarity on these issues as you move forward.

14 First of all, the concerns that have
15 been raised related to fewer jobs. If there was any
16 potential of fewer jobs, this project would not be so
17 strongly supported by the Washington State Labor Council
18 and the Oregon AFL-CIO. I think that is self-evident,
19 that that concern is just not founded. In terms of the
20 lack of concern for the lower river, I think there has
21 been a lot of concern. And at one point it was stated on
22 the public record that there is no concern for anything
23 that is down river from Longview. Clearly, there are
24 challenges related to lack of rail, lack of freeway, lack
25 of land that is developable in some lower communities, but

1 I think if you just look at the work that has been done by
2 the Corps, by the services, by the port sponsors, by
3 elected officials like some of those represented here
4 tonight in Senator Patty Murray and Congressmen Brian
5 Baird, there has been a clear commitment to address
6 concerns in the lower river. One concern that was raised
7 was that there is not money set aside next year for Benson
8 Beach. And, in fact, I think it's important to note that
9 the Senate has passed an appropriations bill that -- the
10 appropriations committee has funding. To do a second year
11 of demonstration project at Benson Beach would be strongly
12 supported. But additional work on Puget Island and with
13 the lower port communities and with the three ports on the
14 Oregon side working together, I think there is a clearly
15 demonstrated concern for lower river concerns, even when
16 they really have nothing to do with channel deepening in
17 many cases.

18 Concern about the Willamette being
19 part of this project, I think it needs to be clearly
20 stated on the record that the Willamette River is not
21 funded, is not permitted, and those -- the funds are not
22 being sought and the permits are not being sought. This
23 is about the Columbia River.

24 Concern raised about ocean disposal
25 still being in the project. I think it is also important

1 to note on the record, as we read the supplemental report,
2 that ocean disposal is eliminated. Ocean disposal for
3 construction of this project is eliminated if this
4 proposal moved forward as it is in the supplemental
5 report. And we are very supportive of that and
6 appreciative of the good work of the Corps and the
7 services to make that happen.

8 Concern that this project won't
9 happen. I think the exact opposite is clear. Huge
10 progress has been made through this supplemental report
11 and other ways. Concerns have been addressed and the
12 construction of this project is clearly warranted at this
13 point and clearly in sight.

14 Concern about lack of time to comment
15 on this project. I think -- I really appreciate that the
16 Corps bent over backwards. I think I'm correct in saying
17 that you proactively extended what's normally a 45-day
18 comment period into 60 days. And I think that was wise
19 since this is an important project, but that -- I think
20 that provides lots of adequate time to comment.

21 The final comment I would make is I
22 think this really is a choice for us: Are we going to
23 move forward or are we going to fall back? And if you
24 look at every element of this project, whether it's
25 related to cost effective transportation, whether it's

1 related to access of businesses, access for products,
2 whether it's related to jobs, whether it's related to
3 accessing federal dollars in sort of economic development
4 in our region, and whether it's related to ecosystem
5 restoration, none of those will occur unless this project
6 goes forward. And in order to really continue moving
7 forward, we need this project. If we don't have it, then
8 every one of those areas, trade, business, development,
9 jobs, access to Federal money and ecosystem restoration,
10 we're going to fall back. And so our coalition would
11 certainly encourage you to keep moving forward.

12 Thank you.

13 MS. ABEL: Thank you. We've come to
14 the end of the list of the people who signed up for oral
15 testimony tonight. I want to thank you all for your
16 thoughtful comments here and I want to turn the meeting
17 back over to Colonel Hobernicht.

18 COLONEL HOBERNICHT: Well, I want to
19 thank you all for coming and I know you're all busy. It's
20 getting late here, 8 o'clock, so this concludes the
21 meeting. Thanks for coming.

22 (Whereupon, the proceedings were
23 concluded at 8:00 p.m.)

24 .

25 .