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-- REVISED --

COLUMBIA RIVER CHANNEL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT
PUBLIC HEARING

Wednesday, July 31, 2002

- - -

(AFTERNOON SESSION)



BE IT REMEMBERED THAT, pursuant to the Washington Rules of Civil Procedure, the Columbia River Channel Improvement Project Public Hearing (Afternoon Session) was taken before Tamara Ross, Certified Shorthand Reporter in the State of Washington and Licensed Notary in the State of Washington, on Wednesday, July 31, 2002, commencing at 3:22 p.m. at the Water Resource Education Center: 4600 S.E. Columbia Way, Vancouver, Washington.

1 VANCOUVER, WASHINGTON;
2 WEDNESDAY, JULY 31, 2002
3 3:22 P.M.

4 .

5 COL. HOBERNICHT: Thank you for
6 coming today. My name's Richard Hobernicht.
7 I'm the Engineer for Portland District of United
8 States Army Corps of Engineers. Most of you
9 probably knew my predecessor, Colonel David
10 Butler. He moved on to Fort Hood, Texas. I
11 look forward to getting out into the community
12 and meeting all of you. If you get a chance,
13 come up and introduce yourself. I'd like to
14 talk to you.

15 Tonight, we're here to exchange
16 information with you about the Columbia River
17 channel improvement project and take your
18 testimony on the project. As you're probably
19 aware, the Corps just completed revising the
20 economic analysis for the project, adding several
21 new environmental restoration components. This
22 was contained in the supplemental project report
23 released earlier this month. I'd like to point
24 out that this is a draft report. Over the next
25 45 to 60 days, we want to hear your thoughts

1 about this report. Your comments are important
2 to us, and we'll be reviewing all of them.
3 If you have information you feel we have missed,
4 please let us know before September 15th so we
5 can consider it before we make this report
6 final.

7 Around the room in the hallway
8 as you walked in today, you'll find
9 representatives from the States of Oregon,
10 Washington, NOAA-Fisheries and the U.S. Fish &
11 Wildlife Service, port sponsors and Corps of
12 Engineers. Please talk to the agency
13 representatives here tonight to understand how we
14 got to where we are today and where we still
15 need to go in the weeks and months ahead.

16 In addition to the oral
17 testimony that will be captured by the court
18 reporter tonight, we will accept your written
19 comments if you prepared any. There's a box in
20 the -- over here. Matt's holding it up for you
21 to place -- some people -- place written
22 testimony.

23 Several things will be happening
24 over the next 45 days. In addition to this
25 session, two more public hearings will take place

1 along the river. The second public hearing will
2 be in Longview on September 5. The third will
3 be in Astoria on September 10th.

4 The other activity taking place
5 is the expert panel's technical review of the
6 Corps' economic analysis. That will take place
7 next week at the 5th Avenue Suite in Portland.
8 The public is invited to attend the Monday and
9 Friday sessions; participate in this. There is
10 more information about this in the Corps' table.

11 With that, I'd like to again --
12 Thanks for coming. I know each of you are very
13 busy. I appreciate you taking time to
14 participate in the process. I'll be here until
15 9 o'clock tonight; the entire session. So
16 please feel free to come up and talk to me.
17 I'd like to get to know you personally.

18 Before we start, I'd like to
19 introduce Laura Hicks. Laura's a member of my
20 staff and Project Manager for the Columbia River
21 Improvement Project. She has a short
22 presentation to get us started, so --

23 MS. HICKS: Let me know if you
24 think I need the mike. Can you guys all hear
25 me? I also would like to thank you all for

1 taking your time to come today. This won't take
2 too long. Basically, our project starts at the
3 river mouth on the Columbia River and goes to
4 106.5 in the Portland/Vancouver area and also
5 includes the Willamette River for its 12 miles.
6 The Willamette portion has been deferred, and it
7 would be sometime in the future after the
8 cleanup efforts on the Willamette are taken care
9 of and we know what's regionally acceptable for
10 the contamination that exists there.

11 So the updates that's in our
12 report is basically Columbia River only. And
13 all of the information that I'm going to show
14 you today basically remains to that part. This
15 project has a long history. Any Corps' project
16 that we do starts with a study resolution by
17 Congress. Ours was received in August of 1989.
18 From there, we went to reconnaissance study,
19 where the Corps chose whether or not there's
20 interest to move to the next phase. There was.

21 We moved into what was called
22 the Cost Share Feasibility Study, where the Lower
23 Columbia River Port paid half of the study
24 costs. We produced a draft feasibility report
25 in October of 1998. We went out for public

1 comment. We finalized the report in August of
2 1999.

3 At that point, we applied for
4 Oregon coastal zone management consistency, and
5 we received U.S. Fish & Wildlife and National
6 Marine Fisheries' no jeopardy opinion. At that
7 point, Congress authorized the construction of
8 this project. You can see their authorization
9 in December of 1999.

10 In August of 2000, National
11 Marine Fisheries Service had new information
12 relating to contaminants in fish -- the
13 bathemetry and velocity that they asked us to
14 look at -- and as a result, withdrew their
15 biological opinion. When the biological opinion
16 was withdrawn, it kind of led to denial for
17 water quality certificates from both Washington
18 and Oregon.

19 So in September of 2000, we
20 received our letters from the governors, denying
21 water quality certification for this project. In
22 September then, the Corps decided to reinitiate
23 consultation with National Marine Fisheries. We
24 added U.S. Fish & Wildlife into that
25 consultation.

1 And in January of 2002, we then
2 decided to supplement the integrated feasibility
3 report -- an EIS -- The document you have today.
4 We also decided to include in that document
5 enough information to satisfy the Washington
6 State Environmental Policy Act; SEPA. And the
7 Port of Longview is the lead agency for that.
8 And they're out in the hall if you want to talk
9 to them if you're from Washington.

10 In May 2002, National Marine
11 Fisheries and U.S. Fish issued a new opinion on
12 the project, and both agencies again issued a
13 jeopardy opinion. We've had numerous public
14 meetings as a result of beginning initiation of
15 this project. We started in November of 1999,
16 where we went to the Portland/Vancouver area, the
17 Longview area, and Astoria. We asked for
18 scoping information on what our environmental
19 documentation should include.

20 We then went back out again in
21 January of 1997; again in the Portland area, the
22 Longview area, and Astoria for public comment and
23 involvement; went back out in November of 1998;
24 same three areas. And between July and
25 September of this year, we reviewed the same

1 thing. That's what we're doing here tonight:

2 We're listening to comments.

3 We've had 17 environmental round
4 table meetings, where we were asking members and
5 stakeholders from the public to come talk to us
6 during our study phase and tell us what their
7 concerns were so we could help design and adapt
8 the project to different concerns. We've had
9 resource agency meetings that revolved around
10 salinity workshops, and where saltwater
11 distribution would go as a result of the
12 deepening.

13 We've had modeling done by the
14 Waterway Experiment Station, which is an arm of
15 the Corps of Engineers. We repeated that when
16 we reconsulted with the National Marine Fisheries
17 Service, and we asked the Oregon Graduate
18 Institute to do numerical modeling for us as
19 well. We've had numerous resource agency
20 meetings pertaining to wildlife mitigation and
21 many that revolve around ocean dredge materials
22 and disposal locations.

23 So as the Colonel has mentioned,
24 we had an information meeting this Monday in
25 Astoria. Today, we're here asking for testimony

1 for the Portland/Vancouver area. On Monday of
2 next week, we'll start a panel that will look at
3 both benefits and costs of this project. It
4 will be a week-long process with the panel. The
5 public is invited to observe that. And then
6 we'll be back, taking public testimony in
7 Longview on September 5th, Astoria on the 10th.
8 And our public comment period will end on
9 September 12th. The Colonel said on Monday the
10 15th, so we'll accept that as well.

11 It's important for our people to
12 understand that this is kind of a multipurpose
13 project, if you will. We have both a navigation
14 component and ecosystem restoration component.
15 The Corps, by regulation, used those two specific
16 authorities with different cost sharing for our
17 sponsors and different ways that we examined
18 them.

19 So since 1999, what have we
20 been doing? The Corps has worked three years on
21 getting smelt data on the Columbia. One of the
22 things that we heard from agency and stakeholder
23 groups was with nonrestricted dredging in the
24 river for construction, there was a concern that
25 smelt may be affected. And so we've asked you

1 -- Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife and
2 Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife to help
3 evaluate smelt distribution and abundance, how
4 they spawn where they are in the river, and help
5 to look at whether or not dredging year round
6 would be impacted to them.

7 We've also funded three years of
8 data collection for sturgeon -- white sturgeon in
9 deep water areas; again distribution, abundance,
10 and their behavior. We've had extensive rock
11 explorations in the channel and have confirmed
12 where basalt would be that would need to be
13 blasted out of the channel. And at this point,
14 it's only at Warrior Rock, which is a pretty
15 substantial reduction from where we were in 1999.

16 We have rerun all of the
17 quantities for dredging. And currently, there's
18 a reduction in dredging volumes as well in the
19 river. We've done additional work for Dungeness
20 Crab; the ESA consultation that I told you
21 about.

22 As a result of the consultation,
23 we've added six new ecosystem restoration
24 components to the project and researched actions
25 -- monitoring actions, and adaptive management.

1 We revised the cost because of the added
2 components to the project and also decided to
3 then update the economics for the project.

4 So this kind of illustrates then
5 the biggest changes that I thought were
6 important. Basically, the dredging volumes have
7 gone from 18.4 million in 1999 to 14.5. And
8 our hydraulic engineer -- when he looks at it,
9 he sees this downward trend. He has -- the
10 1999 report was based on 1995 surveys. We
11 looked at the river in '95 in detail; 1999 in
12 detail; 2001; 2002. We see this downward trend
13 in material available to the river.

14 The basalt has gone down
15 substantially. Utility relocations that we thought
16 were -- might need relocating in 1999 have all
17 been confirmed by the utility owners that none
18 would need to be replaced or relocated. They're
19 all below where we would be dredging.

20 So then the Corps looks at very
21 specifically what we call "national economic
22 development cost" and "national economic
23 development benefits" and marries those up with
24 the benefits to cost ratio. For the Columbia
25 River portion of the project, last time those

1 navigation costs, aside -- when we look at the
2 benefit to cost ratio was a hundred and
3 fifty-four million dollars. Today, that's down
4 to a hundred and thirty-two million.

5 Okay. So the benefits also
6 went down. In 1999, we were projecting
7 twenty-eight million dollars of average benefits
8 every year accruing to the nation. And now,
9 based on current information -- shipping that's
10 here in Portland today -- those are down to 18.3
11 million. So when you look at them, comparing
12 those costs to the benefits, it's reduced from
13 1.9 on the Columbia River from 1999 to the 1.5
14 today.

15 Okay. So we also have the
16 ecosystems restoration component. The Corps'
17 views those as nonmonetary benefits. They're not
18 included in the benefit to cost ratio. They're
19 something that the sponsors will have to cost
20 share on. So the total project costs on the
21 Columbia River were at one hundred and sixty
22 million. Now they're at one fifty-six.

23 So for the NEPA document that
24 you all have, basically, the biggest change from
25 an environmental standpoint were these additions

1 to the ecosystem components that we added. The
2 ones in yellow on your left are the ones that
3 were authorized in the project and included in
4 1999. As a result of the complications, the
5 Corps' changed the proposed plan to add all of
6 the other ones listed on the screen.

7 And so working with the Federal
8 agencies during the consultation, we decided that
9 this time, we were going to take an ecosystem
10 approach that related to juvenile spawns that are
11 listed; that we were looking for things that
12 would help with function, form, and value based
13 on this conceptual model that we developed.
14 What do salmon need? We were trying to be as
15 site-specific as possible. Last go-around, we
16 had a blanket statement in our assessment and in
17 the opinion that said that the Corps' will go
18 out and try to restore up to 4,500 acres in the
19 lower river unrelated to channel deepening using
20 your other authorities. And we were criticized
21 pretty heavily on not knowing where those were,
22 how they were going to be helpful, who was going
23 to do them, when we were going to do them.

24 So this go-around, we said we're
25 going to be as specific as possible. Show

1 people where they are. Identify the benefits to
2 them. And now we're taking comments on those
3 proposals. And then we also tried to make sure
4 that there was assurance that these actions could
5 actually take place. So there was an emphasis
6 to place these on Federally owned property and
7 not work with private land owners.

8 The last go around -- this map
9 illustrates then the lower river from river mile
10 three -- This is our project area here; that
11 line. And river mile 30, which is the kind of
12 the biggest part of the estuary. All the red
13 areas in there are places that we have shoals
14 that we would remove through dredging. The last
15 go-around, we were going to hopper dredge that
16 material and place it offshore in the deep water
17 disposal site.

18 The proposal now includes
19 beneficial use of dredge material. We would
20 still be offering the material from those red
21 shoaled areas now into a temporary sump -- that
22 orangeish colored number one adjacent to the
23 channel that's one river mile long; almost 600
24 feet wide. Material would be about ten feet
25 high. And then we would pipeline from that

1 temporary sump into the lower half of the
2 embankment and -- with the goal of trying to
3 create almost 400 acres of intertidal movement.

4 This is what that area looks
5 like today. That's aerial photography of the
6 area. The area was basically constructed for
7 liberty vessels back in World War II. You can
8 see on your right that some of the bathymetry
9 from 1935, where there is elevations of shallow
10 minus 60912. What it looked like in 1982 after
11 the liberty vessels' construction was done in
12 this mooring basin is minus 18 and deep as minus
13 24.

14 In the report, you'll find we
15 went out last month and got the bathymetry of
16 the area; recent bathymetry. And our goal is to
17 just restore it to what it was back in the
18 '30s. So all the construction material right
19 now is planned to go in the Lois Island
20 embayment for beneficial use of dredge material
21 to create shallow water habitat.

22 Maintenance material for this
23 region is proposed to go to Miller Pillar Pile
24 Dikes. And this is five pile dikes between
25 Miller Sands Island and Pillar Rock. And then

1 through time we would fill between pile dike one
2 and two. And it would probably take three years
3 of maintenance to bring that up to historical
4 levels. Then we'd go between two and three, and
5 so on to try to create 461 acres of shallow
6 water.

7 This area, as you can see in
8 1935, was very shallow. In 1982, CRDDP Atlas --
9 This is an active erosion area. It deepens.
10 And so that's why the pile dikes need to be
11 placed, and the material to bring it back up to
12 historic levels.

13 The last ones that we added
14 don't include beneficial use of dredge material.
15 So those first two -- because they use dredge
16 material -- are included in the our benefits to
17 cost ratio. These ones that I'm going to talk
18 to you now are not because they're nonmonetary
19 benefits and per regulation that -- that's not
20 included in any benefits to cost ratio. So we
21 worked with the services and identified --
22 basically trying to translocate Columbia Whitetail
23 Deer from Butler Hanson (phonetic) to Howard
24 (phonetic) and Cottonwood Island to try to delist
25 Columbia Whitetail Deer.

1 So if there's three distinct
2 populations with certain numbers within their
3 stock, then those species can be delisted. So
4 if it was delisted, the ultimate goal would be
5 to come back to the facility to Julia Butler
6 Hanson Refuge and breach the flood control levels
7 and let this be more of a fish-friendly type of
8 refuge.

9 In the interim, we're going to
10 go and look at doing hydraulic studies next year
11 and provide fish passage to the island. So the
12 first step's to see how much water we would let
13 into the island, whether it would interfere with
14 the Columbia Whitetail Deer. And then if it
15 doesn't, we would allow fish passage through the
16 island, wait to see if Columbia Whitetail Deer
17 were delisted, and then come back to breach
18 these flood control ballasts.

19 Another restoration feature that
20 we've added to the project includes Bachelor
21 Slough, which is on the Ridgefield Wildlife
22 Refuge. And the plan is to dredge the slough
23 and take some of the more silty material and
24 create riparian habitat. This one is contingent
25 upon testing the material within the slough.

1 And if it's cleaned, then we'll continue on with
2 the restoration.

3 Okay. So what we're doing here
4 tonight is taking your public testimony. And
5 you saw that we would be taking them also in
6 September in Longview and Astoria. The Corps
7 then will take that testimony and respond to it
8 in our formal final report. We won't be
9 responding tonight to comments, but we will
10 respond in the final report to comments that we
11 receive. Then we'll circulate that final
12 supplemental document back out to the public so
13 you'll all have a chance to see what we did
14 with your comments. And we'll be applying for
15 water quality certificates again from the states
16 of Washington and Oregon.

17 We'll again apply for management
18 consistency between Oregon and Washington. And
19 if we receive those pieces of information, then
20 the Corps will have a record of decision that
21 we'll file. So that's basically what we're
22 doing tonight. I'm going to turn it over to
23 our facilitator. And she'll explain how we'll
24 do the testimony. Thank you.

25 MS. BROOKS: Good afternoon. I

1 have been asked by the Corps to go over just a
2 few ground rules for testimony before we get
3 started. First off, we would just like to go
4 over kind of -- Speakers will be recognized in
5 the order that they signed up. And I encourage
6 all of you, if you intended on giving testimony
7 today, there were actually two sign-ups: One as
8 you came up the stairs just to let us know that
9 you were here. But over at that table was the
10 actual sign-up to be a speaker or to testify
11 today. So make sure you're on that list if you
12 intend to testify.

13 We would like to ask that
14 everyone is respectful to one another. There
15 may be times when you strongly agree or disagree
16 with the speaker. I'd just ask that you
17 withhold comments or clapping or whatever you
18 feel the need to do until after the speaking is
19 finished. And if you keep it to a minimum so
20 we can get everybody through, we'd like to get
21 folks as many folks up to the microphone as want
22 to today.

23 Let's see. If you can please
24 keep conversation to a minimum on the side so we
25 can clearly hear the speaker. We have a

1 reporter here who's going to be taking verbatim
2 testimony. Be courteous to others, and please
3 stop speaking when your time is up. I'll have
4 cards up here that will give you a one-minute
5 warning. In fact, I'll show you what they look
6 like. So everyone has five minutes. When
7 you're down to your last one, I'll quickly show
8 you a card just to let you know that you might
9 want to start winding it up. And then when
10 your full five minutes have been exhausted, I'll
11 hold this card up, which you won't be able to
12 read. But it has lots of words and letters on
13 it. So you'll know that's what it means.

14 Remember that today's meeting
15 isn't any attempt to get consensus or any sort
16 of vote. It's simply an opportunity for the
17 Corps to hear your testimony. If you cannot get
18 all of your testimony in five minutes, they ask
19 that you give the rest of your testimony in
20 written form. Let's see. Have I got
21 everything?

22 To make sure we end on time, as
23 I said, speakers are five minutes. And your
24 time is your own. In the interest of hearing
25 as many of you as possible, your time cannot be

1 assigned to others. If you are representing an
2 association, not yourself, you still just get one
3 opportunity to speak to make sure we give
4 everyone equal chance. And all of these rules
5 that I'm going over with you will be repeated in
6 each of the public hearings; all three of them,
7 identically.

8 We intend to end this hearing
9 hopefully around fiveish. We got started late,
10 so we might want to go later. We'll take a
11 break, and then we'll again have more testimony
12 this evening which will go up until 9 o'clock.
13 And I think I have covered everything. Are
14 there any questions? I'll leave these up.

15 One last thing: If you could
16 please identify yourself and who you are
17 representing when you come up to the microphone
18 just before you speak, that'd be great. Okay.
19 Let's see. Tom Bradley.

20 MR. BRADLEY: Tom Bradley. Thank
21 you for providing me the opportunity to make a
22 public comment on the Columbia River Channel
23 Deepening Project. My name is Captain Tom
24 Bradley. I'm Commissioner of Port of Vancouver.
25 As a former Ships Master, I know firsthand how

1 important the channel deepening project is for
2 our economy. The state of Washington is more
3 trade dependent than any other state in our
4 nation. There's one in three jobs dependent on
5 trade.

6 At the Port of Vancouver USA,
7 nearly 5500 jobs are directly tied to maritime
8 and industrial activities; two hundred and
9 forty-two million dollar in wages and salaries
10 annually. Their purchases add another hundred
11 and twenty-four million to our local economy.
12 The goods and services they buy help to support
13 other jobs in our community. Overall, Columbia
14 River maritime commerce produces family wage jobs
15 for over 40,000 people and influences another
16 59,000 jobs in the northwest. Last year, marine
17 activity in the lower Columbia River created 1.8
18 billion in personal income. Jobs and businesses
19 in our region require access to cost-effective
20 maritime navigation.

21 The future of the Columbia River
22 navigation directly depends on deepening the
23 channel an additional three feet. This will not
24 only maintain our shipping transportation routes,
25 but will ensure our region's land-based --

1 trade-based economy. This project will also
2 ensure the Columbia River can accommodate the
3 larger fuel-efficient ships that increasingly
4 dominate world trade.

5 In closing, I'd like to
6 reinforce the message that this project has
7 broad-based support from communities across the
8 northwest. There are thousands or more
9 businesses relying on the Columbia River to
10 transport their products around the world. Thank
11 you.

12 MS. BROOKS: Thank you. Mayor
13 Royce Pollard, please.

14 MR. POLLARD: My name's Royce
15 Pollard. I'm honored to serve as Mayor of
16 Vancouver. We want to welcome all of you to
17 our community for this important hearing today.
18 America's Vancouver is proud of our role in
19 international trade, and we're proud of the port,
20 businesses, unions, farms and communities
21 successfully manufacturing, growing, and
22 transporting cargo around the world.

23 But as good and successful as
24 the organization and people in Vancouver are, we
25 cannot be successful in international trade

1 without the necessary infrastructure. And no
2 infrastructure initiative is more important and
3 necessary than the Columbia River Improvement
4 Project that is before us.

5 Without channel deepening,
6 Vancouver ability as an international port will
7 be diminished. Many companies in Vancouver are
8 based here because of easy access to effective
9 maritime transportation. Without channel deepening,
10 approximately 5,500 jobs in Vancouver that are
11 dependent on maritime commerce would be damaged
12 and new jobs potentially lost. Without channel
13 deepening, Vancouver cannot be Vancouver.

14 As the draft supplemental
15 feasibility report and EIS demonstrate, effective
16 maritime transportation is vital to sustaining
17 and strengthening our regional trade-based
18 economy. Deepening the Columbia River navigation
19 channel is critical to maintaining maritime
20 commerce and sustaining businesses, farms, and
21 jobs in Vancouver and throughout our region.
22 This project will ensure that the Columbia River
23 can accommodate the larger fuel-efficient ships
24 that increasingly dominate the world trade fleet.

25 Although it cannot be counted in

1 the Corps of Engineers' formal benefit to cost
2 analysis, it's important to note that our state
3 and local government receive two hundred and
4 eight million each year in revenues generated
5 from Columbia River commerce. These resources
6 enable local governments like Vancouver to
7 provide effective service to all of our
8 residents. I'm not an environmental scientist,
9 but I do know the project has undergone public
10 and private scientific analysis to ensure the
11 channel deepening is conducted in an
12 environmentally sensitive manner that actually
13 leaves the river better off than it was before
14 the project.

15 One of the very positive
16 environmental benefits of this project will be
17 the creation of hundreds of acres of restores
18 wetlands. I'm not an expert -- I am an expert,
19 however, in the needs of America's Vancouver.
20 And we need this channel deepened 40 to 43 feet
21 to remain competitive with that other Vancouver
22 in British Columbia and with communities and
23 countries around the world. That's why the
24 Vancouver City Council and I are on record as
25 unanimous support and strong support for this

1 project. Thank you for bringing this important
2 public hearing to Vancouver. Thank you for
3 listening and considering my comments. And
4 thank you in advance for doing everything within
5 your power to ensure that the Columbia River
6 Channeling Deepening Project moves forward in an
7 expeditious and effective manner. Thank you very
8 much.

9 MS. BROOKS: Representative Bill
10 Fromhold.

11 MR. FROMHOLD: I'm Bill Fromhold,
12 the State Representative here in 49th legislative
13 district. And I also would like to express my
14 appreciation for having the opportunity to make
15 public comment on this draft supplemental
16 feasibility report. This project is extremely
17 important, as has been noted, to our economy and
18 the environmental health of our region.

19 With the completion of the
20 biological opinions and the completion of these
21 drafts supplemental reports, it seems clear this
22 project and must move forward in an economically
23 and environmentally responsible manner. Deepening
24 the Columbia River navigation channel is critical
25 to maintaining our commerce. As has been noted,

1 it has broad-based support of business -- excuse
2 me -- labor, farms, ports and the communities
3 throughout the northwest. Some estimated 40,000
4 family wage jobs are dependent on this project.
5 And in addition to that, there are more than a
6 thousand businesses along the Columbia River
7 that rely on the river to transport their
8 products to the world market. This really, to
9 me, emphasizes the importance of this project to
10 the region's economic health. And as a
11 representative of the 49th Southern District, I
12 would encourage that it be done quickly as
13 possible. And again, thank you for the
14 opportunity.

15 MS. BROOKS: Steve Frasher.

16 MR. FRASHER: My name is Steve
17 Frasher. I'm President of Tidewater Barge Lines.
18 For those of you who might not familiar with
19 Tidewater, we operate towboats and barges in the
20 full 4,065 (phonetic) mile of the Columbia Snake
21 River system. We've been in continuous operation
22 since 1932.

23 And I have actually a very
24 simple view of what otherwise is going to be a
25 complex project. And I'm sure there are many

1 here qualified to talk to the Colonel and the
2 Corps about the complexity. But basically, our
3 view is that cheap reliable transportation
4 provides the very foundation for the creation of
5 a prosperous and healthy economy. Oftentimes, in
6 the fray of the battle over the competing uses
7 of our waterways, we tend to overlook one simple
8 awe inspiring fact: That the Pacific Northwest
9 provides products to the world at a price the
10 world can afford. In return, the Pacific
11 Northwest also gets to consume products from
12 other world markets.

13 The various channel deepening
14 projects undertaken over the years have been a
15 significant response to the persistent global
16 demand for better products at a lower cost.
17 That challenge will always be before us, and we
18 should not waiver in our efforts to meet it.

19 I appreciate the fact that there
20 is a concern over the environmental impact of
21 this project. But let us not lose sight of the
22 fact that the prosperity we have enjoyed as a
23 result of efficiencies gained from channel
24 deepening projects of the past give us the
25 resources to evaluate and improve the environment

1 for the future.

2 The Pacific Northwest provides
3 food and products to the world at a price the
4 world can afford. Let us go forward with this
5 project so we can continue to fulfill that role.
6 Thank you.

7 MS. BROOKS: Keith Jessup.

8 MR. JESSUP: I'm Keith Jessup
9 with Advanced American Diving Service, Inc. I'm
10 the Purchasing Manager and IT person, and I take
11 care of our special project for our properties.
12 I entered the marine industry in January of
13 1966 here in Portland at Northwest Marine
14 Ironworks. It's been a pleasure to see through
15 the years the advancements that's taken place
16 throughout the community along with seeing the
17 impact economically. And I'm also pleased to
18 see the environmental level that is continuing to
19 go forward.

20 Advanced American Diving is very
21 supportive of this project and is excited to see
22 it go forward. And our main critical mistake to
23 lose any ground that we have earned up to this
24 point, as far as what our future holds for us.
25 It would be just a traumatic mistake to be able

1 to lose that. But now is the time to go
2 forward; not five years from now or ten years
3 from now. It would be way too expensive to
4 accomplish the same thing. Thank you.

5 MS. BROOKS: Jim Townley.

6 MR. TOWNLEY: I too want to
7 thank you for giving us the opportunity to
8 comment. I didn't come with prepared remarks.
9 I'm going to basically talk about the people
10 that provide services on the river and those who
11 receive services from the maritime industry.

12 I represent the Columbia River
13 Steamship Operators Association. And as such,
14 those are the individuals that are bringing big
15 ships into the river. Those are the people that
16 operate tugs and barges from Lewiston, Idaho,
17 down the coast to Coos Bay, up the coast to\
18 Gray's Harbor, and beyond. And these folks have
19 a major stake -- especially during these
20 recessionary times -- in the jobs that have been
21 lost and the jobs that I've witnessed being lost
22 just in the last couple of years. This channel
23 deepening is one of the bright lights that
24 offers us hope to continue to stay in the game.

25 I want to talk a little bit

1 about the CRSA because it's in its 80th year
2 right now. During that 80 years, it has
3 participated in healthy debates such as these to
4 help determine the direction of our region and
5 the capital improvements that it needs to stay
6 cost competitive.

7 We've had a hand in guiding
8 these objectives and in furthering our own
9 objectives, which is to try and draw increasingly
10 more trade in the region and the revenues and
11 jobs that go with that. The people of the
12 Pacific Northwest who enjoy the benefits brought
13 to them by international maritime trade have a
14 reputation for being very practical and
15 hard-working. And evidence of that is often --
16 can be found in the earliest seals that they
17 used and their symbols to show it was important
18 to them now, and it was important to their
19 future.

20 The first seal for the Pacific
21 Northwest was in essence a shock of wheat and a
22 salmon. There were other -- other things on it,
23 but that commanded attention. The first
24 territorial seal had those same symbols, plus at
25 the center a sailing ship, indicating that the

1 people recognized the importance of trade even
2 then. This is the 1850s.

3 When the State seal for Oregon
4 alone was formed, slight change: The sailing
5 ship is still there, but it's sailing off to the
6 left. In the center of the seal for the state
7 of Oregon, there's a newfangled invention called
8 the steamship. If you were redesigning a seal
9 today for the Pacific Northwest, I would suggest
10 that at the center, the practical hard-working
11 people of Oregon would put a deep draft ocean
12 ship; probably with a container of grain or some
13 other type of port-indicating symbol right
14 alongside. It's always been important to us. It
15 continues to be important to us.

16 A deeper channel, I want to
17 point out, is a safer channel. I haven't heard
18 that mentioned yet. There's more water under the
19 keel. And even though it allows ships to come
20 with deeper drafts, you've got to keep in mind
21 that the Panama Canal is still a limiting
22 feature. And that means that we'll be able to
23 handle the deeper draft ships. But by and
24 large, most of the ships that come here are
25 going to have more water under the keel. That's

1 an environmental -- that's a safety feature as
2 well as a navigational safety feature.

3 And I'll just finish by pointing
4 out that the cost competitive issue is the
5 bottom line. Cost competitiveness here gives our
6 farmers in eastern Oregon, eastern Washington,
7 and Idaho and even further east and up to as
8 many as 40 states benefit -- in the United
9 States benefit by the use of our railroad
10 system. Market access that is far cheaper than
11 would be otherwise if our system was not here to
12 compete with the Mississippi and other coasts on
13 the -- ports on the west coast.

14 It also gives us continued jobs
15 we've heard about, the revenues we enjoy, and
16 other benefits. We shouldn't forget that the
17 whole lock and dam system we enjoy right now is
18 a result of navigation servitude that led to the
19 ancillary bend at the time, the electrification
20 of the region, hydro power, and flood protection.
21 If we want to continue to be players in the
22 international game and we want to continue to
23 enjoy the capital benefits that maritime trade
24 brings along with the ancillary ones, we cannot
25 afford not to deepen this channel. Thank you.

1 MS. BROOKS: Brad Clark.

2 MR. CLARK: Good afternoon. My
3 name's Brad Clark, and I serve as President of
4 Local 4 of the International Longshore Warehouse
5 Union.

6 First, I'd like to stress the
7 importance of this project to the rank and file
8 members that I've been elected to represent.
9 The Port of Vancouver employees 153 full-time and
10 70 part-time longshore workers. These jobs are
11 desirable family wage jobs. These jobs allow many
12 of our workers to support their families the
13 old-fashioned way: With one income. Due to our
14 ability to make a living wage, many of our
15 members and their spouses take advantage of the
16 opportunity by playing active roles in our
17 churches, school systems, and little leagues.

18 I'd first like to stress that
19 statistics on an issue like this mean very
20 little to me. I have no concept of the
21 millions of dollars that this costs; no concept
22 of the millions of dollars that this generates,
23 nor do I -- do I have a concept of how those
24 millions of dollars would positively affect or
25 hinder our state's economy. The one statistic

1 that I would like to speak about though is the
2 statistic of the 40,000 local jobs and 59,000
3 northwest jobs that will be affected by this
4 project. The reason I'm going to address that
5 statistic is that I don't believe it. I believe
6 waterborne trade on the Columbia River affects
7 many more jobs than these. Yes, there's the
8 obvious ones like my job, river pilots, deck
9 hands on tugs, Port Authority employees. Then
10 there's jobs that were recognized with a little
11 more thought, like the wheat farmers, truck
12 drivers, importers and local manufacturers. Jobs
13 such as these are the ones that I assume make
14 up that statistic. But if we all look a little
15 closer, we're going to see that there's many
16 more jobs that are influenced by the Columbia
17 River.

18 Our jobs allow people to shop,
19 eat in restaurants, vacation, and spend money in
20 other parts of our state. Take away those jobs,
21 and you will see an impact on businesses, both
22 large and small, throughout our communities.
23 Without these jobs, workers will be forced to
24 relocate to larger communities.

25 I want everyone to look at

1 towns in Oregon such as Newport, Astoria, and
2 Coos Bay. I'd like everyone to look at towns
3 in Washington such as Port Campbell and Port
4 Angeles. For many years, the waterborne trade
5 of logs in these communities ran those
6 communities. When that waterborne trade
7 dwindled, it affected everyone in the
8 communities. As people moved away, there became
9 -- became less of a demand for everything from
10 gas stations to grocery stores. Small businesses
11 that could not survive on the tourism that our
12 beautiful states attracts had no choice but to
13 close their doors.

14 Families moving away created
15 less of a demand for teachers, doctors, and
16 construction workers. These jobs also show the
17 affect that waterborne trade has on a community
18 such as ours that is driven by the health and
19 competitiveness of the Columbia River.

20 I would like to offer the
21 Columbia River as a -- as vital to the cities
22 of Vancouver and Longview that gambling is to
23 Las Vegas, the entertainment industry is to Los
24 Angeles, and the automobiles are to Detroit.
25 Importers and exporters will forever take

1 advantage of new technologies that shipping
2 companies come up with to move cargo faster,
3 cheaper, more efficiently, and in greater
4 volumes. These technologies mandate that the
5 shipping companies build oceangoing vessels that
6 require deeper drafts in order for those
7 companies to remain competitive.

8 Soon, all of the smaller ships
9 will be decommissioned and replaced by deep draft
10 vessels. It's paramount for the communities that
11 depend on international trade to do everything in
12 their power to keep base. So on behalf of
13 Local 4 and as a personal voice of many workers
14 throughout our state, I urge you to support this
15 project. Thank you.

16 MS. BROOKS: Ted Farnsworth.

17 MR. FARNSWORTH: I'm Ted
18 Farnsworth. I've worked on the Columbia River
19 ever since 1942, and I've seen changes that most
20 of you can't imagine. I wish the Corps of
21 Engineers would take the sand and move it off
22 the front of my property that they put in there
23 over a period of the last 50 years. I am the
24 only one that's speaking on the part of the
25 ecology of the river. Most of the people are

1 involved in money. Money is fine. But what
2 does it do for the river?

3 This brochure with a nice clean
4 packet of sand is a good example of what the
5 Corps of Engineers has done to the Columbia
6 River over the last 70 years. Sand doesn't grow
7 one thing. It takes fine silt and mud to
8 replenish the fields and the bottom lands to
9 raise the ecological chain -- the grasses, the
10 algae, the plankton that feeds all of our
11 system. As the Corps of Engineers has pumped
12 sand in on the different areas, they've covered
13 up all of the ecological chain. There's no
14 longer an ecological chain. Take Frenchman's
15 Bar, which many of you are familiar with.
16 Frenchman's Bar was comprised of three islands
17 many years ago: Caterpillar Island, Hayes
18 Island, Hulette Island (phonetic). You could run
19 inland behind that -- those three islands, all
20 the way to Blue Rock Landing, which is the base
21 of the Flushing Channel that goes into Vancouver
22 Lake now. All of that area grew grass in the
23 threshes that was 12 and 15 feet high. As the
24 water went down, the nutrients that went into
25 the river were magnified. And they fed our

1 whole ecological chain for the river. This sand
2 doesn't grow anything except a few cottonwood
3 trees.

4 Another good example is Ive's
5 Island (phonetic). The Corps of Engineers has
6 pumped that up there. It doesn't grow anything,
7 except it makes a tremendous nesting place for a
8 nonnative species that normally would be out on
9 the coast. But they've moved inland. And now
10 they take tremendous amounts of our downstream
11 smolts. I would like to see that island pumped
12 back into the river where it belongs, and the
13 sand that is covering places like Frenchman's Bar
14 removed and put in places.

15 And right now, the Corps of
16 Engineers is spending billions of dollars to
17 restore the Missouri to what it once was.
18 They're trying to do the same thing on the
19 Columbia River that they've done on the Missouri
20 River. There's billions of dollars being spent
21 to restore what the Corps of Engineers has
22 destroyed. Ladies and gentlemen, this is -- If
23 they would pump good stuff in there instead of
24 bare sand that doesn't grow anything, it would
25 be fine. But that silt is all trapped above

1 the settling ponds; these dams up above. And it
2 has no way of getting down here.

3 The farmland -- take the Nile
4 River Delta. The Nile River Delta is the richest
5 land in the world, and it used to produce 18
6 and-a-half cuttings of alfalfa per year. Without
7 the floods that feed it because of the building
8 of the dams, they're now down to 14 cuttings a
9 year. And that would -- trend will continue.
10 Much of the Nile Delta has disappeared because
11 the erosion -- the sand is -- It doesn't hold.
12 It takes the mud and the silt to hold that sand
13 in place. The dredging off of the end of the
14 North Jetty has created a terrible hazard down
15 there for boaters and so forth. These are all
16 things that need to be addressed. Thank you.

17 MS. BROOKS: Paul Riggs.

18 MR. RIGGS: Paul Riggs. I
19 represent the International Brotherhood of
20 Electrical Workers. We support the channel
21 deepening project as an important element of the
22 regional transportation infrastructure. If we
23 fail to keep up with the times and shipping,
24 we'll put the areas of commerce at a
25 disadvantage, and the economy and job growth of

1 the entire area will suffer. Thank you.

2 MS. BROOKS: J. Michael Zachary.

3 MR. ZACHARY: Good afternoon. My
4 name's Mike Zachary. I stand before you as a
5 citizen of southwest Washington and the greater
6 northwest. Also standing before you as a Port
7 expert in the maritime industry. I've personally
8 been involved with over 62 strategic master plans
9 throughout the world involving more than 300
10 separate marine and internodal facilities. The
11 largest project I was responsible for was the
12 Port of Los Angeles/Port of Longbeach 20/20 plan.
13 That resulted in 2500 acres of fill being put in
14 the San Pedro Bay and more than 10 billion
15 dollars worth of infrastructure improvements in
16 the San Pedro area to do nothing more than
17 improve the capacity of those two ports.

18 Each of the 62 deep water ports
19 and the 300 marine facilities had three major
20 components for port through-play: One was roads
21 and highways. The other was rail access, and
22 third and probably most important is waterway
23 access. Every one of those ports had one or
24 more of the above impacted either by nature or
25 by the congestion of the area that was in.

1 The Pacific Rim Cargo -- that's
2 containerized cargo -- has been increasing by 7
3 percent per year for the last 15 years. This
4 is a growth rate that will result in the
5 doubling of cargo every ten years.

6 While the regional ports will
7 not see the 6,000 TEU mega vessels that are
8 currently calling on the ports in Los Angeles
9 and Long Beach and Seattle, there is a cascading
10 effect that all vessels will eventually come to
11 the ports of the lower Columbia. These ports
12 must remain competitive with every other west
13 coast port. Because every port of the lower
14 Columbia is, in fact, in competition with every
15 west coast port, including the port of Vancouver
16 British Columbia. It is imperative that in
17 order for the ports of the lower Columbia to
18 remain viable and competitive, the deepening
19 project must be completed in a timely fashion.

20 This is not only a regional
21 project. There are several studies that indicate
22 very clearly that the capacity issues of every
23 west coast port will be put to the test and put
24 to the limit by the amount of cargo they can --
25 they can carry across their docks in the near

1 future -- beginning within the next 20 years.

2 The major projects that are
3 currently occurring on the west coast by other
4 ports -- not only the 20/20 plan previously
5 mentioned, but the Alameda Corps, which is rail
6 access to Los Angeles/Longbeach -- the dredging
7 and rail access in the Bay area for ports of
8 Oakland and San Francisco and the completely new
9 deep water berths in Vancouver, British Columbia.
10 We need this project. Not only to remain
11 competitive, but to ensure that all the lower
12 Columbia ports remain viable for both commerce
13 and national defense. Thank you.

14 MS. BROOKS: Edward Barnes.

15 MR. BARNES: My name is Edward
16 Barnes. I'm a member of the Washington State
17 Transportation Commission. I want to thank the
18 Corps for coming here today to have public
19 testimony to make sure that this project does
20 what it's supposed to do; that it's done right.
21 On behalf of Aubrey Davis, the Chairman of the
22 Commission, all seven members are very supportive
23 of this project. We worked extremely hard in
24 order to make sure that the money necessary for
25 the match for the state of Washington passes

1 through the legislature the same as the state of
2 Oregon did.

3 This is a vital transportation
4 service for not just the state of Washington,
5 but Oregon, Idaho, all the way back to the
6 midwest. So as a Commissioner, our job is to
7 make sure that we provide the best transportation
8 system possible for the people, whether it's
9 rail, air, highways and that. And so we're very
10 supportive for what the Corps is doing. We hope
11 that -- that this project will go forward just
12 as quick as it can. And thank you very much
13 for the time today.

14 MS. BROOKS: Larry Paulson.

15 MR. PAULSON: Thank you. I
16 would like to add my thanks and good afternoon
17 for your coming to the city of Vancouver and
18 state of Washington for this hearing. I'm Larry
19 Paulson. I have the privilege of being the
20 Executive Director of the Port of Vancouver. I
21 would like, if I have time, to speak and add to
22 the thoughts relating to the economic and
23 personal people aspects, if you will, of this
24 project. But I would like to speak instead --
25 at least from my perspective -- to the

1 environmental issues, the process, and the
2 results that have come about during this -- the
3 process that brings us to the supplemental
4 Environmental Impact Statement.

5 I have the privilege to serve
6 on the reconsultation team for the past, oh,
7 year and-a-half two years now serving with
8 representatives of the U.S. Army Corps of
9 Engineers, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and
10 National Marine Fisheries Service. I represent
11 interests of six ports that have been the local
12 sponsors with their respective states in working
13 through questions, answers, and ultimately the
14 biological opinions that eventually came out from
15 those process.

16 Let me remind everyone that the
17 ports in the states have a significant interest
18 in this economically; not just for the jobs, for
19 the benefit to our economy, for the increase we
20 believe that will result in the deepening of the
21 channel, but that we have a cost factor. We
22 have a responsibility for 35 percent of the cost
23 of this project. So we have an interest in
24 seeing it done efficiently, but also seeing it
25 done well.

1 The purpose of the
2 reconsultation process was to collectively
3 understand what the questions -- the right
4 questions were to be asked -- and hopefully, to
5 arrive at answers collectively that would
6 determine what if any impacts would result from
7 the deepening of this channel, which is only 600
8 feet wide and only about 54 percent of which
9 needs to be deepened. And only about 3.5
10 percent of the river affected it if you take it
11 on a vertical straight up element.

12 How it would affect the
13 environment: Through that process, we looked at
14 it and brought in an independent scientific
15 group. We had an open positive evaluation by
16 them and by others. Laura was kind enough to
17 summarize some of the processes and some of the
18 studies that we've gone through to take a look
19 at and make sure we have those -- not only
20 right questions, but the right answers for this
21 -- for this to come about for the biological
22 opinions to be accomplished.

23 And I will add personally that
24 when we started that process, there were
25 disagreements among the Federal agencies and the

1 ports. And there were concerns, and there were
2 different issues that needed to be addressed.
3 But as we proceeded through this process, it
4 became clear that the right questions could be
5 asked. The right answers could be obtained.
6 And these biological opinions could be issued,
7 which eventually occurred after a year and-a-half
8 of extensive effort. And not only were they
9 issued. But they are, I believe, significantly
10 credible, straightforward, and show that this
11 deepening -- This project can be accomplished in
12 an environmentally appropriate way.

13 Laura again went on and
14 explained some of the mitigation restoration
15 issues that will be taken care of. But I think
16 some of the points that need to be emphasized
17 include the fact of restoration. The ecosystem
18 restoration projects which we believe will result
19 not only in not injuring the river, if you will,
20 but making it better; providing a better
21 ecosystem and environment now and for the future.

22 The adaptive management aspect.
23 The monitoring, if you will, I think is a
24 significant part of this process. The agreement
25 by the parties, including the ports and the

1 Federal agencies, to make sure that we continue
2 to monitor what happens in the river. The
3 Benson Beach project, which we've begun just
4 recently to help deal with the erosion issues on
5 the Washington side of the river.

6 We believe, again, that the
7 biological opinions are credible, defensible, and
8 appropriate for this project to be done. And
9 we encourage you to go forward with the
10 finalization and the issuing necessary approvals
11 and permits for this process. I may add we
12 will be adding additional written comments later.
13 Thank you.

14 MS. BROOKS: John White.

15 MR. WHITE: Good afternoon. My
16 name's John White. I don't have any prepared
17 remarks, but I wanted to come down and offer
18 some observations kind of along Larry's line of
19 the process that's gone on here. But I want to
20 do it -- I guess more from a 10,000 foot level.
21 I've watched this process with really kind of a
22 split personality.

23 On one hand, I own a consulting
24 firm that specializes in natural resources
25 consulting, the J.D. White Company, among other

1 service lines. So we have watched the evolution
2 of the ecological side of this with great
3 interest; and frankly, with a critical eye.

4 On the other hand, I have
5 served as Chair of the Board of the Greater
6 Vancouver Chamber of Commerce for two terms,
7 which is really when I first became fully aware
8 and involved in the project. So I -- My first
9 immersion in it was really from the economic
10 side.

11 What's of interest to me is
12 that as you've gone down the path, the
13 environmental and economic interests, in my view
14 anyway, have really become a line. There has
15 been a melding of interests here that I think
16 has resulted in a project that is far better
17 than it was two years ago and certainly better
18 than it was five years ago. And I commend you,
19 and I commend, frankly, the process for that.
20 Because I think that's successful.

21 I heard an interview with
22 someone on the radio this morning. I didn't
23 catch her name. But she was asked, "What are
24 you going to do if they move ahead?" She said,
25 "We're going to sue." That's an unfortunate

1 position to be taking, in my view, during the
2 comment period. I would hope the emphasis would
3 be on providing constructive remarks so the
4 project gets -- a good project gets even better
5 before we get to the finish line.

6 But I commend you, and I
7 commend this community and the communities of the
8 lower Columbia for involving themselves in a
9 process that I think frankly worked right, and
10 worked just like it was supposed to. Thank you.

11 MS. BROOKS: Brad Shah.

12 MR. SHAH: Good afternoon. My
13 name's Brad Shah. I represent SD Services at
14 Port of Vancouver. The perspective I'm going to
15 give you -- I have been in chemical business for
16 the last thirty some years. I've worked in the
17 northwest; first on other side of the river; now
18 here. And how much impact my job having access
19 to the water for commercial purpose. My previous
20 job, we got all of the raw material by ship.
21 So it was very important we get basalt. Because
22 there were two normalities: Electricity and
23 salt. And two years ago, on the ship for
24 quality purpose, and Captain says, "You know,
25 these bumps are -- It's getting pretty hard to

1 come here." And it was even harder to come
2 before. Because those large ships would not
3 come to Portland with full loads. They had to go
4 first on the north, empty the load, then come to
5 Portland to do the job.

6 And we -- It was also in
7 Portland when we had downtime in the business.
8 We had to export. And we had a lot of the
9 ships dump off the load we cannot manage on our
10 docks. There were so much -- it was a cruise
11 ship. So here is the point: That medium-sized
12 or small-sized business does depend on barging to
13 survive and sustain their business; to have good
14 CS's.

15 In my new job, again, I worked
16 on the river; by the river. I'm -- My trade
17 is chemistry. I care for quality. I used to
18 check environmental sample of river water to see
19 how good it is. I appreciate the beauty. I
20 appreciate the beauty from Port of Vancouver when
21 I leave my building and -- So we do want a
22 sound management of our ecosystem. But I also
23 see here people want to do business with us.
24 They want to bring their license and their
25 chemicals to this port. But they're also

1 wondering can they bring in the right quantity
2 in a decent manner?

3 Also, people want to build some
4 small businesses. But they also need -- They
5 see you. Because they have done business with
6 us. They want to extend. So they are looking
7 at you. So it does play a key role that -- to
8 see ocean channels when they make the decision
9 whether to come here or not. So this is a
10 firsthand -- that I can give you how it impacts.
11 So please keep in mind -- I do appreciate your
12 ecosystem with everyone else, and we do want --
13 But to sustain our economy, keep it -- maintain
14 the base we have. It's important we have a --
15 an up-to-date technology and more transportation
16 available here. Thank you.

17 MS. BROOKS: Jim De Stael. Did
18 I pronounce it correctly?

19 MR. DE STAEL: I'll follow the
20 first instruction. It's De Stael.

21 MS. BROOKS: De Stael. Thank
22 you.

23 MR. DE STAEL: Colonel, thank you
24 and the Corps of Engineers for giving me the
25 opportunity to speak today. I'm here as a

1 private citizen and registered voter for all you
2 politicians out there. I'm here to express my
3 support for the proposed Columbia River Channel
4 Improvement Project.

5 Indifference to remarks by
6 previous speakers, my view is also simple. I
7 also believe it is -- that this project is
8 essential to future commerce on the Columbia
9 River and the continued economic growth of all
10 the industries in the Columbia River Basin that
11 rely on that commercial artery. As many who
12 have testified before me can attest, the positive
13 affects of completing this project would reach
14 the Idaho border and -- And conversely, so would
15 the negative affects of failing to go forward
16 with this project. I recognize that the main
17 concern would probably be environmental. But I
18 believe that the risk is already being
19 satisfactorily mitigated. And I'm new to
20 familiarity with this project, and I'm pleased to
21 see the measures that are being taken and
22 outlined.

23 I also heard a previous speaker
24 make mention of the increased safety of the
25 deeper draft. And let me make a note here that

1 I certainly would concur with that. Having
2 served in the Navy for more than 25 years,
3 there's nothing I like better than more water
4 under the keel. So in conclusion, I'd just like
5 to register my support for your project. Thank
6 you.

7 MS. BROOKS: Philip Massey.

8 MR. MASSEY: Thank you for the
9 opportunity to testify today. I'm Captain Philip
10 Massey, and I'm a member of the Columbia River
11 Pilots Association. I've made a living on the
12 Columbia, Willamette, and Snake Rivers along the
13 Pacific Coast for 36 years. As an advocate of
14 the deeper, safer channel, I'd like to address
15 an irony that's been prevalent throughout the
16 years of channeling deepening study that's been
17 going on.

18 Over the past -- Excuse me.

19 Over the past 50 years, the general public has
20 developed a justifiable cynicism with dealing
21 with -- with their dealings with the government
22 and big business. They were misled about
23 Vietnam, Watergate, Iran Contra, and so on.
24 They've been lied to by big tobacco and most
25 recently, Enron, Arthur Anderson, Worldcom, and

1 others. Many of us have come to believe that
2 government and big business lie, while
3 environmental groups tell the truth. The irony
4 is that during the years of study of channel
5 deepening, the opposite has been true. The
6 opponents have told the public that this is a
7 rush job.

8 For over 12 years, this project
9 has undergone study after study by government,
10 industry, environmental and media entities. I
11 shudder to think how many millions of dollars of
12 taxpayer dollars have been wasted on studies and
13 restudies. It made sense twelve years ago, and
14 it makes sense today. The opponents of Brandon
15 (phonetic) have polluted and toxic, and even
16 radioactive dredge spoils. While there are
17 contaminated areas along the banks of the
18 Portland harbor, the Columbia dredge materials
19 have a long history of being used for
20 construction projects, public parks, beaches and
21 even children's sandboxes.

22 Environmental extremists would
23 have us believe that the river is in a downward
24 spiral. That is just not true. City and town
25 discharges are the best they've ever been.

1 Tugs, ships, and recreational vessels now contain
2 all their waste stored and -- to be properly
3 disposed of ashore.

4 When I started on the river,
5 you could go months without seeing a bald eagle.
6 Today, the sightings are daily, along with
7 ospreys, herons, mallards, swans and dozens of
8 other birds that make their living on clean,
9 healthy river.

10 One might ask if all the fish
11 are gone, what are these birds eating?
12 Self-appointed shipping experts say that it is
13 ridiculous to have ships come from 100 miles
14 inland to deliver and receive cargo. I'd ask
15 those experts to take a look at a map. Find
16 out how many hours it takes to get ships to and
17 from larger ports like Houston, New Orleans,
18 Baton Rouge; even New York and Baltimore. Look
19 at how many miles Tacoma, Seattle, Vancouver B.C.
20 -- B.C. are from the ocean. The fact is our
21 -- The fact is our six to eight-hour transit
22 times for tankers and boats carrying tomato juice
23 is very competitive with the other west coast
24 ports.

25 Dreamers continue to tell us

1 that our effort should be dedicated for Astoria.
2 I was once an advocate of that myself. Twenty
3 years ago, there was an effort to locate a super
4 grain terminal in Astoria and supply it almost
5 entirely with up river barges. Turns out
6 shippers don't want to be obligated to just one
7 mode of transportation. They need to have the
8 option of rail and truck.

9 Today, grain terminals need to
10 be able to process 100 car unit trains and
11 having space for 300 and 600 railroads.
12 Container facilities need even more rail space,
13 along with space for hundreds of trucks and
14 thousands of containers. The impact and expense
15 of building a heavy-duty two-rail line and
16 four-lane modern highway to Astoria could be
17 many, many times that of developing and
18 maintaining a river channel.

19 On your next drive to Astoria,
20 take note of how many miles of sensitive
21 wetlands the highway and rail would pass through.
22 Try to imagine bridges, trestles, and the fill
23 that would be required. Millions of Oregon
24 lottery dollars went to dredging the Tongue Point
25 docks and turning basin. And to this day, the

1 only revenue that facility generates is storage
2 of a few barges.

3 I'm told the -- I'm told the
4 area has filled back in. Moving the region's
5 shipping needs to the mouth of the river is such
6 a ridiculous fantasy, it merits absolutely no
7 further comment or consideration.

8 Those who think that they know
9 a lot of about economics have said Portland and
10 Vancouver should abandon their pursuit of full
11 cargos and containers and go for niche cars. I
12 would like to point out it's the niche cargos
13 that have failed us. Fiber-optic cable docking
14 has quit. Aluminum oil (phonetic) blocks are
15 down, and logs and lumber are a fraction of the
16 past. We cannot support more than 40,000 family
17 wage jobs
18 and billions of tax dollar -- taxpayer-owned port
19 facilities with Pendleton shares and Intel
20 processors.

21 Even with all the misinformation
22 the public has been fed, its strong majority
23 still supports the safer, deeper channel. Our
24 area's suffering far more than the other west
25 coast ports. The world has heard of dam

1 breaching and drought problems and channeling
2 deepening opposition, and the message has been
3 Columbia ports are closing for business. It is
4 vital to make up for lost time and money and
5 move ahead with this project with all speed.
6 Thank you.

7 MS. BROOKS: Peter Huhtala.

8 MR. HUHTALA: Hi. My name is
9 Peter Huhtala. I'm the Executive Director of
10 Seadog, the Columbia Deepening Opposition Group.
11 I'm from Astoria. Thank you for the opportunity
12 to offer these initial comments. And welcome,
13 Colonel Hobernicht. I really hope that you have
14 an enjoyable and rewarding stay here commanding
15 this district, and that you come to love the
16 Pacific Northwest.

17 The Columbia River estuary is
18 critical habitat for every run of salmon in the
19 Columbia Basin. It is also critical to historic
20 waves of life and the vitality of long-standing
21 communities.

22 A recent newspaper report
23 described the people of the lower river as
24 "hostile to the deepening project." I suppose
25 we are hostile, in the sense that pioneering

1 Europeans encountered hostile native tribes.
2 When salmon, smelt, lamprey, sturgeon, crab and
3 rock fish that's eaten -- sustain us -- are
4 threatened, when our fragile economy faces
5 another thrashing, when the health of our
6 children is at stake, we tend to get a little
7 defensive.

8 The decision whether to deepen
9 the Columbia River shipping channel is -- in the
10 way proposed, is a major skirmish in the battle
11 for the Columbia River estuary. It is
12 unfortunately promoted in ways that mimic
13 warfare. If the plan proceeds, there will be
14 clear winners and losers. The winners will be
15 certain shipping companies; many foreign-based;
16 most multinational corporations. And with
17 nebulous advantage, but clearly engaged in the
18 axis are regional interests who fear a gradual
19 erosion of market access.

20 Obvious losers include the
21 commercial fishermen of the estuary and near
22 shore ocean, the families and communities of the
23 lower river, the Tribes of the Columbia Basin,
24 and all who depend on a relatively healthy
25 estuary ecosystem for existence, enjoyment, and

1 spiritual nourishment. Good people have made
2 poor choices about the design and timing of this
3 navigation improvement.

4 The most vexing problem is what
5 to do with the incredibly massive volumes to be
6 dredged. A reasonable and equitable solution may
7 not be forthcoming. The latest plan offers to
8 dump millions of tons of sediment in estuary
9 waters, destroying much of a rare, innovative,
10 low-impact fishery, diminishing opportunities for
11 aquatic development, killing endangered salmon,
12 and increasing -- yes -- the distribution of
13 toxic contaminants.

14 I guess that draws a battle
15 line in the sand. Although it's widely accepted
16 that this battle will extend to the court
17 system, the real struggle is -- is within the
18 hearts and minds of the people of the great
19 northwest.

20 I guess I should add guts.
21 Because I don't believe that this region can
22 stomach the inequity, the unfair trampling upon
23 the icons of salmon and historical life-styles.
24 We desperately need an about face, to borrow
25 another military trend. It should no longer be

1 acceptable to fight among ourselves, to set up
2 these public works projects so that relative
3 political power makes for winners and losers.
4 We need a new approach.

5 I envision the Corps as part of
6 the leadership in an ambitious plan to protect,
7 enhance, and restore the Columbia River estuary.
8 We can end the pollution, stop the destruction,
9 and build healthy habitats. Instead of tacking
10 on speculative and misnamed restoration to a
11 project that would further degrade the estuary,
12 we can approach the lower river system as -- as
13 a river -- as a system that cries for overall
14 improvement. Within this context, navigation
15 improvement could naturally emerge.

16 This is a way for the Corps to
17 rebuild credibility. It is also the springboard
18 to regional peace. With -- and -- and
19 encompassing conservation -- true conservation --
20 and a superior economy, we might just forget why
21 we're fighting. The first step is a courageous
22 withdrawal of this deepening project from further
23 consideration. I urge you, Colonel Hobernicht,
24 to make this recommendation. Thank you.

25 MS. BROOKS: Scott Patterson.

1 MR. PATTERSON: Good afternoon.
2 My name is Scott Patterson. I'm here today
3 representing the greater Vancouver Chamber of
4 Commerce. And like a few others, I do not have
5 prepared comments. But I do want to add a few
6 things, and echo the sentiments of many of the
7 individuals who have gotten up and spoken in
8 favor of the project.

9 I've had the great fortune,
10 actually, in a previous line of work as a
11 congressional staffer in the mid 1990s to begin
12 working and getting very familiar with this
13 project. And if you would have told me at that
14 time that I'd be standing here in a different
15 capacity in 2002 testifying in a similar public
16 hearing, I probably wouldn't have believed you.
17 But here I am.

18 The Chamber is a strong
19 supporter of this project -- has been for a
20 number of years -- and shares this support with
21 a number of other business organizations in the
22 Vancouver area. Columbia River Economic
23 Development Council is one of them. And I
24 believe you'll be hearing from another one here
25 shortly.

1 The benefits have been -- have
2 been stated very well by many of the proponents.
3 They're quite obvious, in terms of additional
4 river commerce, economy, jobs that impact people.
5 The studies that have been done and redone have
6 always focussed and not lost sight of those
7 jobs. But they've also enhanced the
8 environmental benefits that I believe are
9 numerous. And we commend the Corps on the
10 efforts; also on the sponsor ports for sticking
11 with this project and realizing it to the end.

12 So I'm just here to urge you to
13 continue to move forward; hopefully wrap this up
14 very soon. And we'll be there to be strong
15 supporters. And I'm very anxious to see this
16 actually happen. So thank you.

17 MS. BROOKS: Ginger Metcalf.

18 MS. METCALF: Good afternoon.

19 I'm Ginger Metcalf, the Executive Director of
20 Identity Clark County. We represent community
21 and economic developments in Clark County and 87
22 major corporate leaders within the Clark County
23 region.

24 My admiration too is extended to
25 the ports and the industries that have pursued

1 this effort and their compliance with the many
2 demands and requests that have been placed on
3 them because of this project. And to the rest
4 of us too who have stood in the sidelines
5 urging them on. It's demonstrative, if you
6 will, of the importance of the project to the
7 region.

8 One of the tools we have to
9 offer perspective employers is the basis for the
10 transportation of goods. One piece of that
11 basis is several challenged beyond our ability to
12 keep up with demand. And that is surface
13 transportation. Cost of quality of life-wise,
14 cost of getting goods to market-wise, we cannot
15 afford to have additional trucks on roads. We
16 need to get product transport -- transported in
17 the most cost effective, environmentally friendly
18 manner possible.

19 As with our forefathers, the
20 river with which we are blessed offers that
21 opportunity. In this fiercely competitive world
22 of recruitment of industries that provide jobs,
23 the entire Columbia River region affected by the
24 proposed channel dredging project will be
25 enhanced with the addition of that tool that

1 provide for the accommodation of deeper draft
2 vessels. Thank you for visiting our community,
3 and thank you for providing this opportunity to
4 share the vital nature of this project to our
5 region.

6 MS. BROOKS: Dave Ripp.

7 MR. RIPP: Hi. I'm Dave Ripp.

8 I'm the Executive Director for the Port of
9 Woodland. Thank you for providing the
10 opportunity for the Port of Woodland to comment
11 on the draft of the supplement feasibility report
12 and the EIS for the Columbia River Channel
13 Deepening Project.

14 Couple points I want to touch:
15 Deepening the Columbia River navigation channel
16 is critical to maintaining maritime commerce and
17 sustaining business, farms; especially during
18 these difficult economic times.

19 The project has broad-based
20 support from businesses, labor unions, farmers,
21 ports, and communities throughout the northwest.
22 Over 40,000 local family wage jobs are dependent
23 on, and another 59,000 northwest jobs are
24 influenced by the Columbia River maritime
25 commerce. More than a thousand businesses rely

1 on the Columbia River to transport products
2 around the world.

3 This project will require
4 dredging just 50 -- fifty-four percent of the
5 navigational channel; only three and-a-half
6 percent of the total Columbia River between the
7 mouth and Port of Vancouver. The remaining
8 areas of the channel are already naturally deeper
9 than 43 feet.

10 The supplemental report is a key
11 part of the project's sensitive environmental
12 review, which is important to both mitigating
13 both local and environmental impacts, and
14 insuring that this project leaves the river
15 better off than beforehand.

16 The estuary and ecosystem for
17 the Columbia River are important and can be
18 protected and enhanced while the channel
19 deepening project advances. The Columbia River
20 channel deepening project will benefit both the
21 economy and environment.

22 In closing, I urge you to
23 finalize the supplemental report and grant the
24 pending regulatory permits and approvals to move
25 this important project to completion. Thank you.

1 MS. BROOKS: Liz Wainwright.

2 MS. WAINWRIGHT: Good afternoon.

3 My name is Liz Wainwright. I'm the Executive
4 Director for the Merchant Exchange, the maritime
5 Fire Safety Association and Clean Rivers
6 Cooperative. On behalf of these organizations
7 and the other organizations that the Merchant
8 Exchange manages, thank you for the opportunity
9 to provide testimony today. The Merchant's
10 Exchange has been uniquely involved in commerce
11 and well-being of this community since its
12 establishment in 1879. In 1879, the Exchange
13 was organized to -- by local businessmen to
14 provide vessel and cargo information to the
15 community when a ship entered the Columbia River,
16 bringing with it commerce and trade to support
17 and foster the development of our
18 Columbia/Willamette River system.

19 These services continue today.

20 As the Executive Director of the Exchange, the
21 full impact of commerce and trade that enters
22 our region is well-known to me. Though we are
23 a small organization with only 16 employees, we
24 manage and provide support to eight
25 marine-related member associations, as well as

1 individual members who total upwards of 180
2 organizations, each with a broad spectrum of
3 membership, each with its employees, each
4 contributing to the economy of our area.

5 My 16 employees pay taxes,
6 purchase service, goods, and participate in the
7 viability of the community and are very concerned
8 and supportive of the channel deepening. The
9 Maritime Fire & Safety Association and Clean
10 Rivers Cooperative are two cooperative
11 organizations that provide emergency response in
12 -- to fire -- marine fires and oil spill
13 response to the community. They're both
14 committed to environmental stability in this
15 region and are supportive of this channel
16 deepening as well.

17 The importance of shipping to
18 the economic well-being of our region is -- if
19 not the most, one of the most significant. The
20 affect caused by any loss of trade resulting
21 from an inability to transverse our river system
22 would be incalculable.

23 To adequately assess the impact
24 of shipping, one must start with the independent
25 family and those -- the grain producers and

1 those business that rely on farming. That
2 farmer and farm family is the infrastructure that
3 has built our economic stability going back to
4 our days of pre-statehood.

5 Without an economic way to ship
6 grain and other products on -- from our
7 interior, it would become much more difficult and
8 less cost-competitive to support this region. It
9 would compound losses, and it would mean a loss
10 of jobs. This support -- this scenario
11 supported by the channel deepening, by the
12 businesses, the labor unions, the farmers, ports,
13 and the communities. As you've already heard,
14 there's close to 100,000 jobs either directly or
15 indirectly which are relying on maritime trade in
16 one form or another.

17 Deepening of the Columbia River
18 channel is critical to maintaining these
19 business, the jobs, and the communities and the
20 families that are supported by the river. With
21 channel deepening, our region will remain
22 competitive and viable. This project will ensure
23 that the Columbia River can accommodate the large
24 fuel-efficient ships that increasingly dominate
25 the world trade.

1 As everyone is aware, the
2 current state of our economy mandates that we
3 provide every opportunity possible to the
4 businesses of our region to remain viable. The
5 critical importance of marine commerce to our
6 region is dependent on cost-effective and
7 competitive transportation. The effect in the
8 navigation of the Columbia River is dependent on
9 deepening the channel from 40 feet to 43 feet.
10 With this in mind, the Columbia River Channel
11 Deepening Project will benefit not only our
12 economy, but our environment as well.

13 As a citizen of the Pacific
14 Northwest and all that it represents, the estuary
15 and ecosystem of the Columbia River are important
16 and should be protected and can be enhanced by
17 this project. An independent panel concluded the
18 deepening will have no measurable affect on the
19 threatened and endangered fish. Biological
20 opinions issued by the National Marine Fisheries
21 Service and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Departments
22 demonstrate the environmental protections and
23 benefits of this project. By ensuring safe
24 transit of our river system, we will enhance the
25 safeguards placed in the -- in place for our

1 environment.

2 In closing, I'd like to read
3 from the -- "Effective maritime transportation is
4 vital to sustaining and strengthening our region
5 in this global economy and this trade-based
6 economy. I urge you to finalize the
7 supplemental report and grant pending regulatory
8 permits and approval to move the important
9 project to completion. Thank you for the
10 opportunity to speak for you."

11 MS. BROOKS: Dan James.

12 MR. JAMES: Good afternoon. My
13 name is Dan James. I'm a governmental
14 professional based in Portland, but I'm here as
15 a private citizen today to speak in support the
16 Columbia River Channel Deepening Project and
17 encourage the Corps of Engineers to move forward
18 on finalization of plans. I simply want to add
19 to what others have said to recognize that this
20 project is crucial to our region -- Oregon,
21 Washington, Idaho, and Montana and really --
22 really the nation. It's critical to continue to
23 develop the rural interior of our -- of our
24 region. It's especially the key in -- in -- on
25 the west side as well, given the fact that

1 we're so dependent upon this river system and
2 commerce that it generates.

3 With that, I'll simply
4 encourage, again, the Corps to move forward.
5 And I appreciate your time. Thank you.

6 MS. BROOKS: Jonathan Schlueter.

7 MR. SCHLUETER: Good afternoon,
8 Colonel, and members of the public. My name is
9 Jonathan Schlueter. I'm the Executive Vice
10 President of Pacific Northwest Grain & Feed
11 Association in Portland. It's a regional trade
12 organization that represents the commercial grain
13 handlers operating in the Pacific Northwest
14 states of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana.
15 In that description, I'm representing 210
16 commercial grain elevator companies, animal feed
17 mills, flour milling companies, processors of
18 grain and exporters of grain operating in these
19 four states.

20 And it's perhaps appropriate
21 before your 5 o'clock dinner hour to have a
22 representative of the agricultural community to
23 offer this testimony in the few brief minutes
24 that we have here. Because we are the ones
25 that supply wheat, barley, corn, soybeans,

1 sorghum, various feed and grain materials to 40
2 different countries around the world. And 95
3 percent of that grain which is grown in Oregon
4 ends up in the exports stocks of our member
5 facilities who are on the lower Columbia River
6 and member facilities up in the Puget Sound
7 District as well.

8 So there is a big demand for
9 our grain and agricultural products around the
10 world -- growing demand for those products. As
11 you consider the testimony that's already been
12 presented here, and that which will be presented
13 later this evening, I'm sure, you will be left
14 with a couple of conflicting comments and
15 thoughts. I would -- I would like to address
16 my comments to four areas of issue.

17 First of all, that this is not
18 a local issue. This is not a Portland or a
19 Vancouver issue. This is very much a regional
20 issue, and I would submit a national issue.
21 Because having described the member of companies
22 I represent are scattered across four northwest
23 states. We're drawing grain here from 11 states
24 as far east as Minnesota, as far east as Kansas,
25 as far south as Arizona, and all points in

1 between. Therefore, this issue and the decisions
2 made here locally and by our region will be
3 affecting farmers and communities and businesses
4 and supply those farmers and communities in 11
5 western states. And so it is very much a
6 regional and national issue in scope.

7 Those of us who worry about our
8 local economies -- local and regional issues --
9 have very much to consider the regional and
10 national implications of those decisions as we
11 consider this issue.

12 Number two, those who worry
13 about the economy and jobs of this area need to
14 realize that 40,000 jobs are dependant on upon
15 the Columbia/Snake system and the commerce that
16 moves on this river system and the infrastructure
17 that serves it. Indeed, the channel deepening
18 project contends that it will expand those job
19 opportunities, create additional employment
20 opportunities, and indeed, represents the best
21 employment growth opportunity that we have in
22 this region. At a time when Oregon and
23 Washington are facing some of the worst
24 unemployment situations in this country, I
25 suggest this is a very valuable and necessary

1 project for this region and for the people that
2 live here.

3 Thirdly, you will hear much
4 about the environmental implications and whether
5 or not this is good for the environment or has
6 impacts against the environment. I suggest that
7 in trying to supply the food needs of a growing
8 planet, my bet and my confidence is with the
9 American farmers. The American farmer is the
10 best trained, best equipped, best financed, best
11 skilled farmers in the world.

12 And at a time -- in the short
13 time that I'm allocated to testify here this
14 afternoon, the world's population is increasing
15 at a pace of 268 people per minute; thousand and
16 -- two hundred souls in the five minutes that
17 I'm allocated. Those people expect to be fed.
18 My confidence is with the American farmer to
19 supply those needs, rather than to rely on the
20 itinerate third world proper devising whatever
21 means or mechanisms left to his disposal to
22 provide for he and his family.

23 And the implication to the
24 environment here on the Columbia River pale in
25 comparison to some of the environmental

1 degradation that may be wrecked upon other parts
2 of the world if we are to forego this
3 opportunity or miss this opportunity.

4 Fourth and finally, much in the
5 past year has been focussed on our own national
6 security and whether or not our nation is safe
7 and whether or not we can -- we can do business
8 with other countries around the world.

9 In the next month, off the
10 Columbia River District, the grain exporting
11 companies that I represent will be shipping
12 grain to North Korea, to Ethiopia, to Pakistan,
13 and to Afghanistan, as well as food aid to
14 hungry nations in South Africa currently wrecked
15 by drought. People who trade cannot afford to
16 fight against each other. Trade fosters improved
17 relations between people. And improved relations
18 is -- at a time that we -- a time like this,
19 something that we all desperately need and
20 desperately desire.

21 Trade fosters better dependency
22 and better relations among people. And this
23 project, by improving trade opportunities,
24 allowing deeper draft vessels to carry needed
25 grain to the people and countries that need it,

1 are desperately needed at this time.

2 Those who criticize American
3 farmers or worry about the agricultural picture
4 of our country and whether or not we have a
5 stake in this river and in this issue should not
6 -- should not be criticizing American farmers
7 when your stomach is full. It's time for your
8 dinner break. I ask you to consider these
9 points as you do. Thanks.

10 MS. BROOKS: Mr. Crow.

11 MR. CROW: My name is Minyo Crow
12 (phonetic). I basically am a citizen here in
13 Vancouver, Washington. In addition to the
14 dredging of the Columbia River channel, a new
15 freeway must also be in place between the ports
16 of Portland and Vancouver. It's absolutely
17 critical that merchant shipping companies move
18 products in and out of the ports as efficiently
19 as possible. We must be very aggressive in
20 competing for new business with other sea ports.
21 And without any attractions like this highway,
22 why should they come?

23 Right now, most coastal seaports
24 are focussed on southeast Asian markets. But
25 wait five to seven years from now when the

1 implementation of reforms takes into effect.
2 Russia will be the next big market. And we
3 must be at the forefront. What that indicates
4 is it's critical that we definitely do dredge
5 the Columbia River so we will be competitive
6 from New Zealand all the way to our longtime
7 adversaries, Russia, and -- to move products in
8 and out. To do what Governor Gary Locke was
9 promoting, as far as from the heartland of
10 Washington and Oregon's Made in Oregon products.
11 Get that out to the market. Distribute it to
12 the rest of the world; Europe, Asia, and
13 obviously Africa. We need to be competitive.
14 We need to go ahead and increase our
15 productivity as far as jobs, as far as quality
16 of liveability, and improve our regional
17 economy. Because right now, Oregon and Washington
18 are not doing very well.

19 And I personally feel that the
20 best thing for this region, in addition to the
21 dredging, is a third bridge of the Columbia
22 River basically connecting SR-500, SR-14,
23 tunneling through Forest Park, connecting to
24 Highway 26 using the Burlington right of way.
25 I've already been soliciting the Bush

1 administration on this proposal as well as the
2 Republican and some Democratic candidates to move
3 our economy -- move region forward. And let's
4 get the ball rolling. Thank you very much.

5 MS. BROOKS: Is there anyone in
6 the room that hasn't had a chance to speak that
7 didn't get an opportunity to sign up? Please
8 state your name when you're up front. Thanks.

9 MS. BRANER: Good afternoon. I
10 guess I am the last one before dinner, so I'll
11 try and be short. My name's Louise Braner
12 (phonetic). I'm the Government Relations Director
13 and Counsel to the Pacific Northwest Waterways
14 Association.

15 We advocate for Federal policy
16 in support of regional economic development, and
17 we represent multiple industries in both public
18 and private sectors in Washington, Oregon,
19 Idaho, and Montana. Our membership of
20 approximately 110 organizations includes
21 individuals from across this region and includes
22 port authorities, tow and tug operators,
23 steamship operators, pilots, state economic
24 development agencies, local governments,
25 agriculture and forest products producers, energy

1 interests, and consulting engineers and
2 environmental consultants. We work with Congress,
3 Federal agencies and regional leaders on
4 transportation, trade, energy, and environmental
5 policies. I appreciate the opportunity to offer
6 comments on the DEIS. I'll make some brief
7 comments on the environmental issues. But the
8 bulk of my comments are addressed to the
9 economic benefits of the project.

10 We support the project and urge
11 that you continue taking all necessary steps
12 towards implementation. We urge you to continue
13 the collaborative, cooperative, multi-agency
14 approach that you have used thus far, and we
15 urge you to continue seeking the public's input
16 as you have throughout this process.

17 We believe the project is
18 proceeding in an environmentally sensitive manner
19 and further believe that many of the ecosystem
20 restoration projects proposed in the document
21 will improve salmon habitat restoration. The
22 Upper River Salmon Biological Opinion states that
23 the lower Columbia River ecosystem needs to be
24 improved in order to improve survival rates for
25 the salmon as they move downstream. The project

1 as proposed in the document will help accomplish
2 those goals. In fact, initial corporation's
3 being sought -- construction corporation is being
4 sought for ecosystem restoration; not for
5 dredging.

6 This project is perhaps the most
7 important economic development project for the
8 long-term prosperity of our region. The Columbia
9 River and Snake River Ports support this project
10 for the obvious reasons: The deepening will
11 foster increased and more efficient cost-effective
12 movement of cargo. But at -- I probably don't
13 even need to address this after Mr. Schlueter.
14 But my next subject was the agricultural
15 producers are supporting it in eastern -- eastern
16 Oregon, Washington and Idaho.

17 Some of the issues that relate
18 to the agricultural producers -- if they don't
19 have -- if they don't have a competitive
20 Columbia River option for transporting their
21 cargo, then those -- That cargo is going to go
22 onto the trucks. The trucks are going to
23 congest the highways; wear them down. There
24 isn't money now to repair those roads. It's
25 also going to congest the railroads. And they

1 are already congested.

2 This, of course, is going to
3 impact, you know -- the traffic delays will be
4 impacting the freight folks as well as passenger
5 traffic. And an unimproved Columbia River/Snake
6 River system also means that if they don't have
7 the Columbia River to go to, the Mississippi
8 River prices are going to go up because there's
9 not a competitive balance between the two
10 systems.

11 We've got cargo that comes into,
12 for example, Puget Sound, heading for Chicago.
13 If the ports in Puget Sound are congested with
14 grain that's going out, then they're not going
15 to be able to get container traffic moving east.
16 And that means prices for everyone is going to
17 go up. But it also means Washington state,
18 which is the most trade-dependent state in the
19 nation, will lose jobs and will lose market
20 share -- further market share to the southern
21 big ports in California.

22 If our transportation system is
23 not maintained and improved, commerce will be
24 lost. And we as a society will not meet the
25 future needs of our citizens; over 40,000

1 family wage jobs and another 59,000 northwest
2 jobs depend directly or indirectly on the
3 Columbia River's maritime commerce. More than a
4 thousand businesses rely on this river to send
5 their products to the global market.

6 Clearly, PNWA believes that this
7 project is highly beneficial to the region and
8 the nation. In fact, we believe that the Corps
9 new economic analysis is overly conservative and
10 greatly underestimates the benefits to the region
11 and nation. We respectfully request that the
12 technical review group carefully look at the
13 benefits side of the economic question. I
14 appreciate the opportunity to speak with you.
15 And -- Guess you're not asking questions. So I
16 won't ask you that.

17 MS. BROOKS: I believe that's our
18 last speaker. You guys want to wrap up?

19 COL. HOBERNICHT: Again, I want
20 to thank you for coming. I know you all have
21 busy schedules. I'll be -- I'm not going
22 anywhere until 9:00. So if I have a chance to
23 talk to you, I'd sure like to meet you.

24 (MEETING ADJOURNED AT 5:07 P.M.)

25 .