

**2008 Washington, DC Trip
May 5-7, 2008
Issues Recap**

Background:

On May 5-7, 2008 members of the Portland Business Alliance traveled to Washington, D.C., for meetings with the regional congressional delegation and Administration officials. Special thanks to Ball Janik, Tonkon Torp and The Gallatin Group for their sponsorship of our trip.

On Tuesday, May 6, trip participants discussed the Alliance's federal legislative agenda and other key items of regional significance with the congressional members in meetings at the United States Capitol. At the dinner, members heard a presentation from Jonathan Martin of Politico.com, who gave attendees an update on the 2008 Presidential Election.

On Wednesday, May 7, Alliance members met with officials from the Bush Administration to discuss regional transportation priorities, renewable energy policy, and a planned Alliance trip to China in 2009. If you would like more information on the annual Washington, D.C., trip; please call RJ Cervantes at 503-552-6772.

Columbia River Crossing:

In their meetings with the regional congressional delegation, Alliance members firmly expressed their support for the Columbia River Crossing Project. After meeting with Congressmen DeFazio and Blumenauer and Senators Wyden and Smith, participants came away from the meetings feeling optimistic that the regional delegation is solidly in support of the project, however, a great deal of work remains to be done. Congressman Blumenauer urged the Portland business community to clearly and unequivocally make the project the top transportation priority for the Portland area. He also urged the participants to continue pressing local officials for their support of the project.

Higher-Education Research Appropriations:

Alliance members urged the congressional delegation to give continued support of the ONAMI and OTRADI appropriations requests. For ONAMI, the Alliance is supporting a total of \$15 million in appropriations for nanotechnology research. For OTRADI, supporters are seeking \$4 million from the Center for Disease Control for research in public health improvement. Alliance members also discussed Portland State University's request for \$6.5 million in appropriations for the expansion of research space at the University. The congressional members were supportive of the requests, but expressed caution regarding the ability to pass earmark requests given the political dynamics at the federal level.

Columbia River Channel Deepening:

The Alliance expressed support for the Columbia River Channel Deepening request for an appropriation of \$31 million for the effort to deepen the channel, a jetty study, and the maintenance dredging of the Willamette River. The congressional delegation was very supportive of this effort, and cited the vital importance of the rivers to the statewide economy.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions:

In meetings with the regional delegation, as well as with Vice Chair of the Energy and Commerce Committee Congresswoman Diana DeGette, participants were updated on federal legislation being developed to address greenhouse gas emissions and global climate change. They spoke of the internal debate within the congress on how to best address the issue. Congresswoman DeGette was optimistic that a bill will pass in the near future, but was not certain if the bill will include a national carbon tax or a cap & trade system to control emissions.

Renewable Energy Tax Credits:

In all of the meetings with the congressional members, participants were vocal in their support of the extension of the Production Tax Credit for wind energy and the Investment Tax Credit for solar energy. All members of the congressional delegation agreed that the tax credits were vital to Oregon's investments in renewable energy, and were supportive of finding a way to have a long-term extension. However, they were cautious about the extension's prospects because of the pay-go budget rules.

Tualatin Basin Water Supply:

The Tualatin Basin Water Supply project is key to business growth much of Washington County. Members of the Alliance discussed the importance of federal support for the water system with members of the congressional delegation. Senators Smith and Wyden are committed to supporting the project and to advocating for continued federal assistance.