

a proposal to establish a new or improved transportation crossing of the Columbia River. This crossing will involve either existing facility improvements or new connections between SR 14 in Washington to SR 35 and/or I-84 in Oregon. The Washington State Department of Transportation has designated this proposed crossing as State Route 35 (SR-35).

A new or improved Columbia River crossing is necessary to effectively accommodate current and future traffic demands, address multi-modal accessibility, enhance movement of freight and other goods, improve public safety, and improve current and future traffic operations.

Alternatives under consideration include (1) no action; (2) multi-modal options; (3) improvements to traffic and toll operations, (4) improvements to the existing bridge; and (5) constructing a new bridge or tunnel at or near the existing location. Potential crossing corridors being evaluated along the Columbia River include: West Hood River I-84 interchange, Second Street in Hood River (using the City Center exit on I-84), the existing bridge crossing, and east of Hood River near Stanley Rock. Design variations being evaluated include adjustments to grade, alignment, and crossing type.

A series of preliminary meetings have already been conducted between various public groups, the project Steering Committee, a Local Advisory Committee, and a Resource and Regulatory agency Committee since this project has been introduced. The ideas presented at these meetings will be incorporated into the environmental process as will all the necessary impacts and alternatives required by the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) and Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations.

Letters soliciting comments will be sent to appropriate Federal, State, and Local agencies, including private organizations and citizens who have previously expressed or are known to have interest in this proposal.

A public scoping meeting will be held on March 8, 2001, from 5 to 8 p.m. at Fidel's at the Gorge (restaurant), located on SR 14 at 120 East Steuben in Bingen, Washington. On March 8, 2001, a resource and regulatory agency scoping meeting will be held in Troutdale, Oregon, at the Oregon Department of Transportation Maintenance Facility from 1:30 to 3:00 p.m. Notification of the public scoping meeting will be published in the local newspaper and through mailed announcements.

In addition, a public meeting will be held prior to completion of the draft

EIS. Public notice will be given of the time and place of all proposed meetings during Draft and Final EIS development. The draft EIS will be made available to the public and all agencies for review and comment prior to all public meetings.

Interested parties are encouraged to provide suggestions and comments in order to ensure that the full range of issues related to this proposed action are addressed and all potential impacts identified. Comments or questions concerning this proposed action and the EIS should be directed to the FHWA, Washington Division or Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council at the addresses or telephone numbers provided in the Contact Information Section.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Number 20.205, Highway Planning and Construction. The regulations implementing Executive Order 12372 regarding intergovernmental consultation on Federal programs and activities apply to this program)

Issued on: February 14, 2001.

Michael Kulbacki,

*Transportation and Environmental Engineer,
Olympia, Washington.*

[FR Doc. 01-4706 Filed 2-26-01; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-22-M

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Highway Administration

Environmental Impact Statement: Mendocino County, California

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of Intent.

SUMMARY: The FHWA is issuing this notice to advise the public that an environmental impact statement will be prepared for a proposed highway project in Mendocino County, near the town of Hopland, California.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: C. Glenn Clinton, Team Leader, Program Delivery Team—North, Federal Highway Administration, 980 Ninth Street, Suite 400, Sacramento, California 95814-2724, Telephone: 916-498-5020.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The FHWA, in cooperation with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) on a proposed project to construct a four lane freeway or expressway bypass of the community of Hopland, on Route 101 in Southern Mendocino County. The project limits extend from kp 14.2 to 22.5 (pm 8.8 to 14.0). The project is

needed to reduce operational conflicts, accommodate existing and future traffic demand, reduce travel time, increase safety, improve air quality, reduce noise in Hopland and provide the facility concept identified in the "Inter-regional Transportation Strategic Plan".

Three alignments are being proposed at this time as well as a "No Build" alternative. All of the alignments potentially affect oak woodlands, riparian forest and pre-historic cultural resources. A Public Open House has been held to solicit opinions from the community and a Project Development Team has been formed to determine the scope of the project. There will be a public scoping meeting to discuss the proposed project and another opportunity for public comment on the draft environmental document during the circulation phase of the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS).

To ensure that the full range of issues related to this proposed action is addressed and all significant issues identified, comments and suggestions are invited from all interested parties. The views of agencies that may have interest in the effect of the proposal on historic properties are specifically solicited. Comments or questions concerning this proposed action and the EIS should be directed to the FHWA at the address provided above.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Number 20.205, Highway Research, Planning and Construction. The regulations implementing Executive Order 12372 regarding intergovernmental consultation on Federal programs and activities apply to this program)

Issued on February 15, 2001.

C. Glenn Clinton,

*Team Leader, Program Delivery Team—
North, Sacramento, California.*

[FR Doc. 01-4705 Filed 2-26-01; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-22-M

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Maritime Administration

[Docket Number: MARAD-2001-8952]

Requested Administrative Waiver of the Coastwise Trade Laws

AGENCY: Maritime Administration, Department of Transportation.

ACTION: Invitation for public comments on a requested administrative waiver of the Coastwise Trade Laws for the vessel CHARISMA.

SUMMARY: As authorized by Public Law 105-383, the Secretary of Transportation, as represented by the Maritime Administration (MARAD), is