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WSDOT RAIL OFFICE

April 9th, 2007

Ms. Elizabeth Phinney
WSDOT Rail Office
P.O. Box 47407
Olympia, WA 98504-7407

RE: STB Finance Docket No. 34936, Northern Columbia Basin Railroad Project

Ms. Phinney:

Port Districts in the state of Washington are municipalities authorized by the Revised Code of Washington, Title 53, giving broad powers for economic development. Grant County Port District Number 10 (Port of Moses Lake) is the primary proponent of the Northern Columbia Basin Railroad Project in and near Moses Lake, Washington. The Project Segments 1, 2, 3 & 4 are inside the district boundary of the Port of Moses Lake.

In February of 2002, we formed a community task force to study the rail alignment that serves Moses Lake. We funded a preliminary feasibility study by Ken Casavant, Washington State University, identified current problems and studied several alternate routes for a new line.

In 2005, the State Legislature funded a follow-on study to engineer an alignment, and assess the environment for the preferred routing.

It is the intention of the Port of Moses Lake to construct and own the new proposed rail alignment, and to contract with the Columbia Basin Railroad for operations.

It can be noted that the Port of Moses Lake envisions many benefits to the proposed rail line including safety issues, transportation efficiencies, and economic development. However, we also are keenly aware of the local environment for fish, wildlife and botanical issues. The preferred best-route was chosen for the following reasons:

1. Lowest potential cost
2. Best use of existing industrial property
3. Lowest impact on community
4. Lowest impact on environment

The Port of Moses Lake envisions only minor impacts to the environment in Segment 2 (refurbish existing track) & Segment 3 (new track in Grant County Int'l Airport industrial area). The land is mostly flat, and zoned for industrial purpose. We also anticipate support from

"Your Partner For Progress"

Executive Manager: CRAIG L. BALDWIN

Commissioners: DAVID "KENT" JONES - LARRY D. PETERSON - DELONE D. KRUEGER

landowners in this area whose property may be affected. The impacts in Segments 2 & 3 might be determined to be non-significant, or easily mediated.

Segment 1 (Wheeler to Parker Horn) will cross Crab Creek near Grant County Road-4 NE, and will require a landfill or bridge width of approximately 175 feet. However, this vicinity has been studied recently by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) for widening of State Route-17, 1/3rd of a mile south of the proposed rail crossing. The environmental impacts should be similar. Land ownership issues have not been fully determined as of this date.

The Port of Moses Lake also owns and operates the Grant County International Airport and surrounding Industrial Park. This is a 4,700 acre complex which has become a world-class heavy-jet training and testing facility used by the Boeing Company, Japan Airlines, the U.S. Military and others. The Federal Aviation Administration will require consent for 'construction or alteration' of facilities within a 4 mile radius of an airport. We are familiar with the FAA requirements and are confident that the railroad will pose no problem for aviation, at either Grant County Int'l Airport or the Moses Lake Municipal Airport near Wheeler.

The Port of Moses Lake supports a decision by the STB and WSDOT to proceed with an Environmental Assessment rather than an Environmental Impact Statement.

Sincerely,

PORT OF MOSES LAKE



Craig L. Baldwin, C.M.
Executive Manager

CB:aa

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