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Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

**Moshannon Forest District**  
**3372 State Park Road**  
**Penfield, PA 15849**  
May 9, 2008

**Bureau of Forestry**

Phone: (814) 765-0821  
Fax: (814) 765-0621

Ms. Sandy Basehore  
Skelly and Loy, Inc.  
2601 North Front Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17110

Dear Ms. Basehore:

This letter expresses our concerns in regard to reactivation of the rail line from Wallacetown to Gorton, Pa. The Bureau of Forestry worked many years to develop a 40 mile signature hiking trail traversing the relatively pristine Moshannon State Forest surrounding Black Moshannon State Park. The trail development was accomplished through partnerships with the Penn State Outing Club and the Keystone Trail Association, who contributed many hours of volunteer time to complete the trail.

The proposed rail line re-activation poses some serious concerns to the ambience of the area. The approximately three mile portion of the Allegheny Front Trail currently skirts some rather quiet and remote landscapes providing a unique experience to the adventurous hikers walking the trail. These experiences will be dramatically changed if the trains return to this area. The noise from the frequent train carloads through the valley will detract from the existing appeal of the area with the trains only a few hundred yards across the valley from the trail.

The re-activation of the line will reintroduce the exhaust fumes from the diesel engines that will again be present. Air pollution is one concern, as well as a potential for spills, along this section are also concerns. The promise of transporting solid waste, other wastes and possibly biofuels and other products could impact the soils and water along this route.

The reintroduction of trains along this route greatly increases the potential for wildfires as well. Even if the engines are kept in good repair, there is the potential for wildfire starts due to brakes, carbon emissions, and rail maintenance.

The re-activation of the line also poses interference with wildlife travel depending on the time of day the trains run.

**Stewardship**

**Partnership**

**Service**

These are the major concerns to the resource that stand out at this point. If you have any questions on this matter feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,



Robert G. Merrill Jr.  
Forest District Manager  
Moshannon Forest, District #9

CC. W. Wynick  
J. Fiedor  
Planning Section