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U.S. Department of  
Homeland Security

United States  
Coast Guard



Commandant  
United States Coast Guard

470 L'Enfant Plaza East, SW  
Room 7110  
Washington, DC 20024-2135  
Staff Symbol: CG-0921  
Phone: (202) 245-0520  
Fax: (202) 245-0529

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SEP 16 2008

The Honorable Ron Wyden  
United States Senate  
223 Dirksen Senate Building  
Washington, DC 20510-3703

Dear Senator Wyden:

This is in response to your letter dated August 29, 2008 regarding the disposition of three rail bridges on the Coos Bay Line, which are currently under review for Surface Transportation Board abandonment proceedings.

The Coast Guard's policy regarding bridges over navigable water that are no longer used for land transportation is to notify the owner that the bridge is in violation of federal law and constitutes an unreasonable obstruction to navigation. In addition, the Coast Guard would advise the bridge owner of the following options available to them:

- 1) Return the bridge to an active transportation function.
- 2) Remove the main navigation span and retain portions of the structure in the waterway. For this option, the bridge owner is required to consult with the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE). Failure to obtain the ACOE's approval to leave parts of the structure in the waterway, after it has lost its character as a bridge will subject the bridge owner to removing the bridge in its entirety. This removal must occur down to or below the natural bottom of the waterway or such other elevation as deemed appropriate by the Coast Guard District Commander in consultation with the ACOE.
- 3) Completely remove the bridge from the waterway at no expense to the Federal Government. The Coast Guard's involvement in the removal process would include early review of the proposed removal plan to allow the Coast Guard to notify effected mariners to ensure that the reasonable needs of navigation are met during the removal operations.

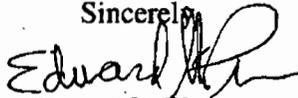
Hence if the Coos Bay Rail Line is formally abandoned, the three bridges referred to in your letter will be considered bridges that are no longer used for transportation and the Coast Guard would move forward with the process outlined above.

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Subj: RESPONSE TO LETTER DATED AUGUST 29, 2008 REGARDING THE  
DISPOSITION OF THREE RAIL BRIDGES ON THE COOS BAY LINE

My Senate Liaison Office at (202) 224-2913 would be pleased to respond to any further  
questions you or your staff may have.

Sincerely,



**Edward St. Pierre**  
**Commander, U.S. Coast Guard**  
**Congressional and Governmental**  
**Affairs Staff**  
**By Direction**