

EO-327
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SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

Washington, DC 20423

Office of Economics, Environmental Analysis, and Administration

October 4, 2006

Kathryn A. Kusske Floyd, Esq.
Mayer, Brown, Rowe & Maw LLP
1909 K Street, N.W.
Washington D.C. 20006-1101

Re: STB Finance Docket No. 34936, Northern Columbia Basin Railroad
Project in Moses Lake, Washington

Dear Ms. Floyd:

Pursuant to 49 CFR 1105.10(c), we are granting your request of October 2, 2006 for a waiver of the six month prefiling notice generally required for construction projects under 49 CFR 1105.10(a)(1).

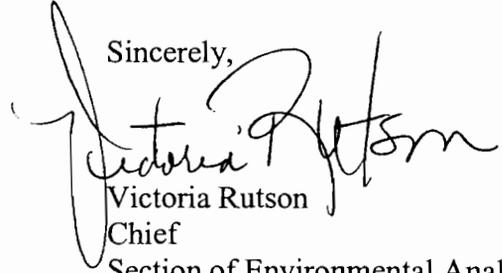
On July 24, 2006, the Surface Transportation Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) met with you regarding the proposed construction and operation of a number of proposed railroad improvements, collectively known as the Northern Columbia Basin Railroad Project in Moses Lake, Washington. At the meeting, SEA was provided with an overview of the project, as well as maps and photographs of the area surrounding the proposed rail line.

The Port of Moses Lake (Port) plans to seek authority from the Board to construct and operate a number of proposed railroad lines in the Moses Lake area. Specifically, the Port proposes to build a new rail line from Wheeler to just east of Parker Horn, in order to bypass downtown Moses Lake. In addition, the Port proposes to build a new line that would connect the Columbia Basin Railroad Company's existing line to the east side of the Grant County International Airport. In addition to the new rail line construction, the Port anticipates that there will be some rehabilitation of an existing rail line that connects the Columbia Basin Railroad Company to the airport. The purpose of this proposed project is to improve freight rail service in the Moses Lake area.

At the July 24, 2006 meeting, SEA presented an overview of the Board's environmental review process, SEA's role in the process, and the use of third-party consultants. Based on information from this initial meeting, SEA believes that it has adequate information and that the applicant is sufficiently aware of the environmental process to grant this request.

If we can be of further assistance, please feel free to contact either me or Ms. Christa Dean of my staff at (202) 565-1606.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Victoria Rutson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "V" and "R".

Victoria Rutson
Chief

Section of Environmental Analysis

cc: Mr. Mike Rowswell, WSDOT
Mr. Albert Anderson, Port of Moses Lake