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**SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD**  
Washington, DC 20423

*Office of Economics, Environmental Analysis and Administration*

June 27, 2008

Karen Miles, Civil Engineer, WA  
Federal Aviation Administration  
Northwest Mountain Region  
1601 Lind Avenue SW, Suite 250  
Renton, Washington 98057-3356

**RE: STB Finance Docket No. 34936, Northern Columbia Basin  
Railroad Project – Construction and Operation – In Grant County,  
Washington; Request for Information and Preliminary Comments**

Dear Ms. Miles:

In April 2007, the Surface Transportation Board (Board) and the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) began an environmental review for a proposed rail construction project called the Northern Columbia Basin Railroad Project.<sup>1</sup> The project is located in the Moses Lake area of Grant County, Washington. I have enclosed a map of the proposed project area for your reference.

The purpose of the Northern Columbia Basin Railroad Project is to provide rail service to lands designated for industrial development in northern Moses Lake, as well as the Grant County International Airport (GCIA), and to enhance opportunities for economic development. The three components of the proposed rail project include:

- Building a new rail line from Wheeler to Parker Horn;
- Improving existing track between Parker Horn and the GCIA; and
- Extending the existing Columbia Basin Railroad's track to the industrial areas just south and east of the GCIA.

Pursuant to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act, the Board's environmental rules, the Washington State Environmental Policy Act, WSDOT requirements, and other applicable Federal and state laws, the Board's Section of

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<sup>1</sup> For the proposed project, the Board and WSDOT are co-lead agencies. See 40 CFR 1501.5(b).

Environmental Analysis (SEA) and WSDOT are preparing a Preliminary Environmental Assessment (EA) that evaluates the potential environmental effects of the proposed rail project, including any reasonable and feasible alternatives to the proposed route.

The purpose of this letter is to request comments from your agency on the resources under your jurisdiction that could be affected by the proposed project, as well as any information on permits or approvals that may be required by your agency. We appreciate your assistance in identifying whether resources of concern to your agency may be affected by the proposed project. Please send your comments to:

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

Please send emails to:  
Phinneec@wsdot.wa.gov

Once the EA is issued, the Federal Aviation Administration will receive a copy and will have another opportunity to submit comments.

If you have any questions about this proposed project, please do not hesitate to contact Ms. Phinney or the SEA contact, Christa Dean, who may be contacted at (202) 245-0299 or [christa.dean@stb.dot.gov](mailto:christa.dean@stb.dot.gov). Thank you for your time and we look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,



Victoria Rutson  
Chief  
Section of Environmental Analysis

Enclosure

cc: Elizabeth Phinney, WSDOT

# LEGEND

Columbia  
Basin  
Railroad



Not to Scale

Segment 2  
West

Segment 2  
East

## Moses Lake

3 NE Road (Wheeler)

Segment 1

O NE Road

Grant County  
International  
Airport

Randolph Rd NE

Stratford Road NE

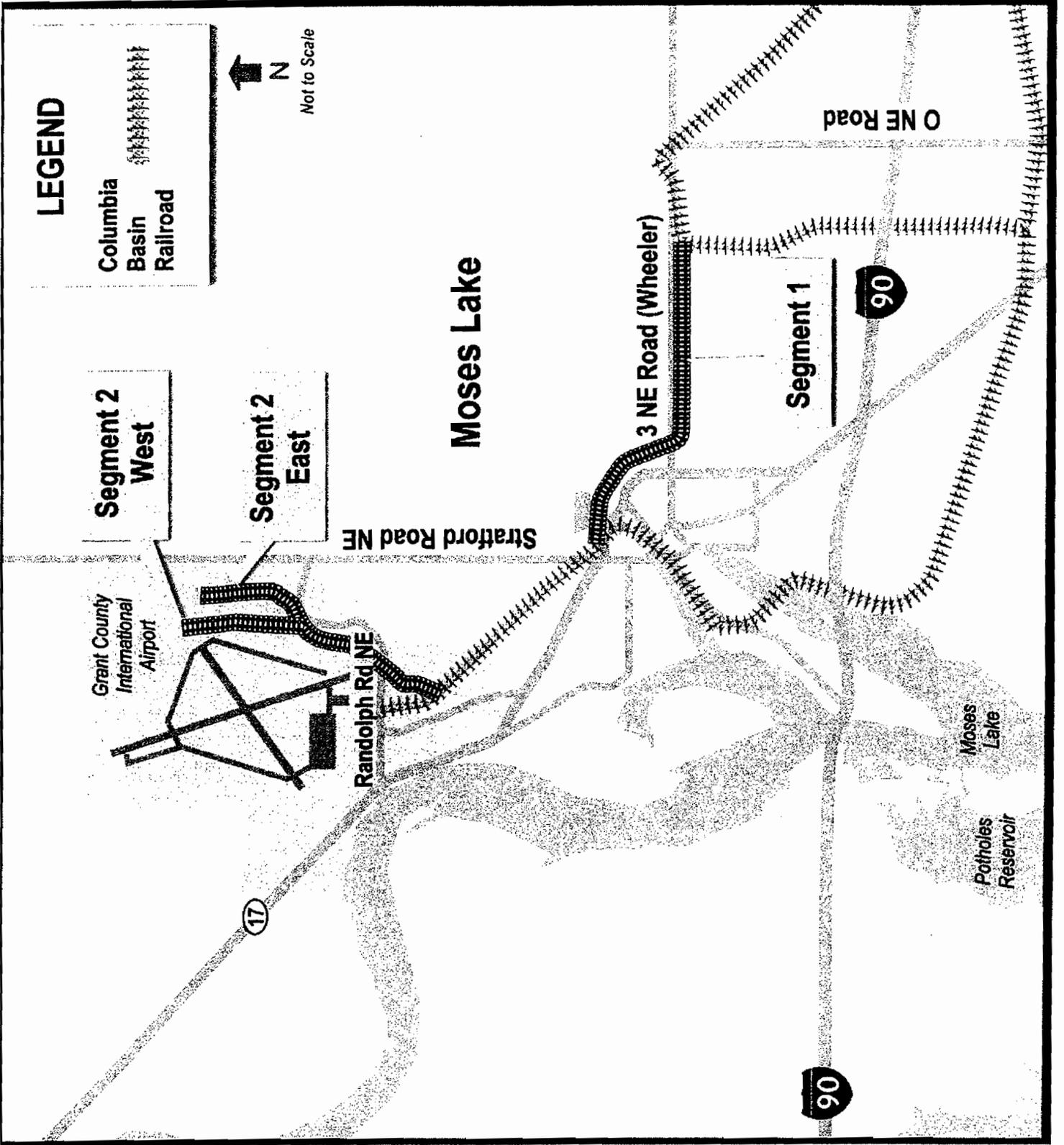
Moses  
Lake

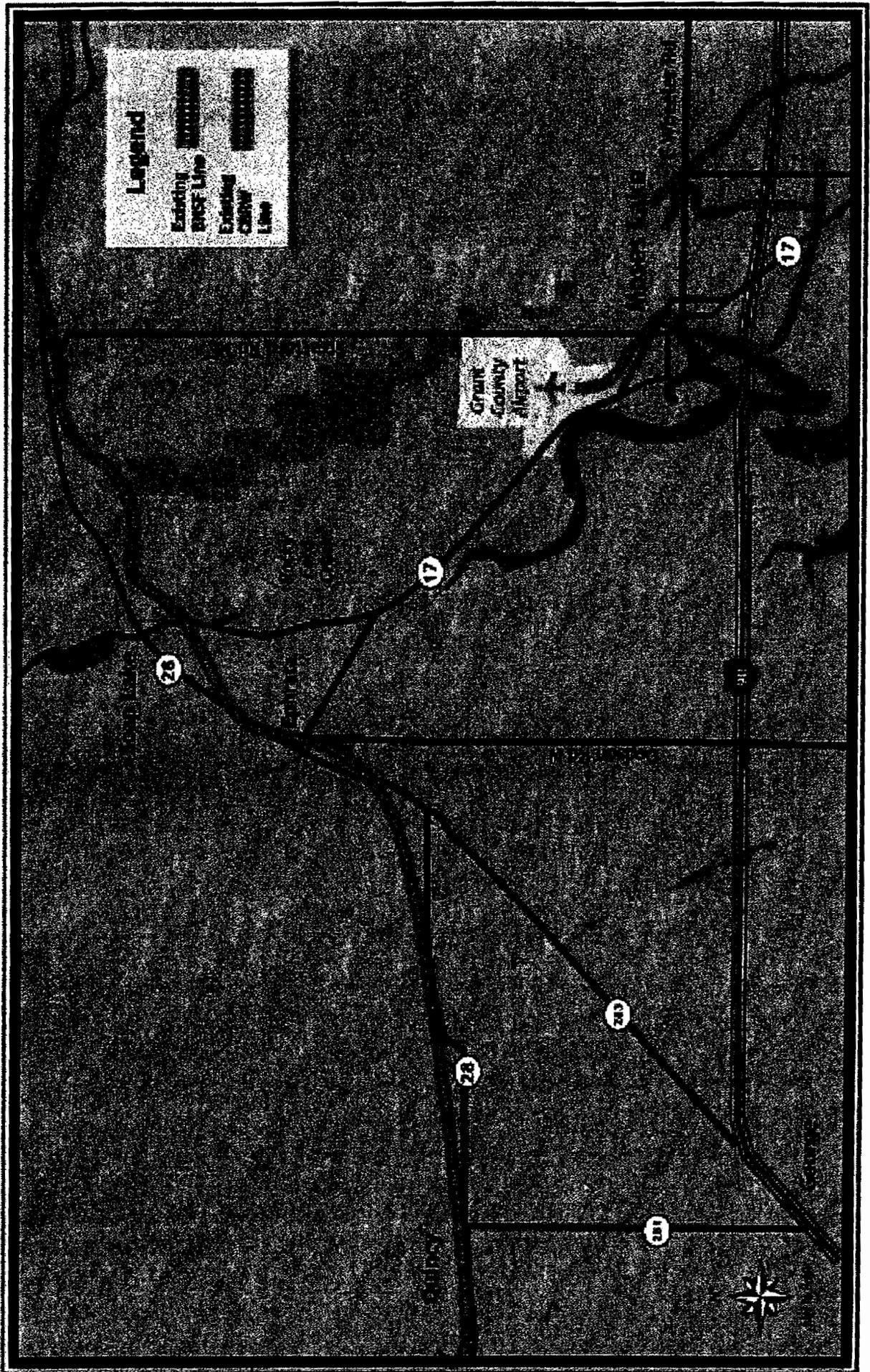
Potholes  
Reservoir

17

90

90





**Legend**

Existing BNSF Line 

Existing CB&Q Line 

Grant County Airport

20

17

17

23

6

6

