

Nov. 2,
2016 -

From: Jill Barker - P.O. Box 572 - Mosier, Oregon
97040
- jillbarker@aol.com ①

To: the Wasco County Board of Commissioners:

I am writing to urge the Wasco County Commission to deny Union Pacific's application to expand a single rail track to a 4-5 mile double track in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area through the Mosier area. This proposal violates many aspects of the Wasco County National Scenic Area Land Use and Development Ordinance (NSA-LUDO) and the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (CRGNSA) Management Plan, as well as the CRGNSA Act itself!

The CRGNSA Management Plan does not permit railroad expansion in the General Management Area (GMA) Open Space zone where approximately half of the proposal would occur. The project would unlawfully allow Union Pacific to violate fire and safety issues and would negatively impact sensitive wildlife habitat, as well as wetland and riparian vegetation. This project would have negative effects on all aspects of the air, land and waters and would detrimentally impact the visual and scenic integrity of the Gorge, and certainly, none of the project is

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compatible with any of the surrounding uses.

The Union Pacific Railroad proposal fails to address the cumulative adverse effects on scenic, recreational, cultural and environmental resources of the Gorge's NSA. This proposed project would unlawfully harm ALL of the natural, scenic, cultural and recreational values of the NSA.

Additionally, the project violates the Yakama Nation's protected Treaty rights in many aspects. This project proposal has also failed to determine if the project is in the public interest, another mandated requirement.

I fully concur with the entirety of the appeal of Union Pacific's application filed by the Friends of the Columbia Gorge, the Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility and the Columbia Riverkeepers. The Wasco County Planning Commission has approved, illegally and unwittingly, this Union Pacific application in September of 2016.

From: jilbrkrb <jilbrkrb@aol.com>

To: wcplanning <wcplanning@co.wasco.or.us>

Subject: Sept 6, 2016 comments for the Wasco County Planning Commission on the Union Pacific rail expansion hearing

Date: Mon, Aug 29, 2016 8:23 am

To the Wasco County Planning Commission:

Dear Sirs;

I am writing to let you know that my husband, Charles, and I are very much opposed to Union Pacific's (UP) proposed four mile rail expansion in the Columbia River Gorge through the Mosier area. This new track will result in a very large increase in the train traffic in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (NSA) which will inevitably cause a huge risk to the environment and public health of the entire area. The oil trains, carrying explosive Bakken oil through the NSA corridor, are literally dangerous "bomb" trains which, along with the coal trains, pose a real and substantial threat to the Gorge's environment and communities. These rail oil tankers are highly volatile and can spontaneously combust simply due to high temperatures which are so common in the summer. It is not only a matter of a derailment causing an explosion and fire, but often that of a tank exploding due to the high temperatures, which then causes a derailment and subsequent fires!

Union Pacific has not been honest about the extent of their proposed increase in rail traffic and also has a very poor safety record, demonstrating their inadequate maintenance of even their existing tracks and trains, let alone four miles of new tracks! This proposal threatens the innumerable scenic, recreational, cultural and environmental resources of the Columbia River Gorge and conflicts with all the protections and inherent purpose of the CRGNSA. This proposal would severely and negatively impact the countless wetlands and habitat along the Columbia River and would necessitate filling in many of these wetlands, which is totally unacceptable and actually violates the National Scenic Area Act, a federal mandate.

The disastrous oil train derailment and fire in Mosier on June 3, 2016 demonstrated our worst concerns and fears about the transportation of oil and/or coal through the NSA. It is obvious that UP does not care about the safety or resources of the Gorge, especially since they so rapidly started running more oil trains through Mosier so soon after the devastating disaster and before a full clean-up, even though Mosier City, Oregon's governor, many Congressional representatives and most of the local citizens requested that this oil rail traffic be stopped until all the safety issues were fully and adequately addressed.

One of the biggest threats to this arid area is devastating wild fire that is so prevalent, deadly and unstoppable, especially in the windy summer months. This is already a dangerous and undeniable menace to all who live anywhere in the vicinity and who are deeply invested in their homes, farms, businesses and communities. It is unthinkable that UP, in order to add to their profit margin, would so recklessly jeopardize one of Oregon's greatest national and world-class treasures in such a transparently greedy and arrogant proposal which only benefits UP and the foreign energy markets and which only adds more pollution and degradation to such a significant river, airshed and entire region. Union Pacific is using the Gorge only as a transportation corridor, with NO local benefit, for more dirty fossil fuels which are threatening all life on the planet and should be immediately phased out! All of this is being considered without even implementing an environmental impact statement. We urge the Commission to deny this expansion as well as to stop all future oil-by-rail or coal-by-rail shipments through the Gorge!

Thank you for your attention,

Sincerely,

Jill and Charles Barker
P.O. Box 572
Mosier, OR 97040