



Brenda Jenkins <brendaj@co.wasco.or.us>

Fwd: File # PLASAR-15-01-0004

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Draft

Mon, Nov 7, 2016 at 12:42 PM

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From: **Laura Ackerman** <lackerman@landscouncil.org>
Date: Wed, Nov 2, 2016 at 2:45 PM
Subject: File # PLASAR-15-01-0004
To: "angieb@co.wasco.or.us" <angieb@co.wasco.or.us>

November 2, 2016

Dear Ms. Brewer,

Please accept into the official written record these comments on the UP rail expansion at Mosier, Oregon.

The Lands Council was a part of the original appeal and we continue to support the appeal #PLAAPL-16-0001 written by Friends of the Columbia Gorge, Columbia Riverkeeper and Physicians for Social Responsibility. For the sake of brevity I will not reiterate our concerns about this expansion since it was done in the above mentioned appeal, and we agree with it.

I will say, however, that it's imperative that Wasco County understand the up rail impacts of this decision. The train that derailed and caught on fire in Mosier in June of this year, initially went through Spokane. And before that it went through other communities. This is not a decision that can be made out of context.

This time it was Mosier that was unlucky to have the accident occur in their community, and Mosier was lucky that it was not severe. But at any given time accidents can happen anywhere along the rail line and that potential of oil derailments and fires, can cause grave risks to every rail community.

Expanding the UP line at Mosier not only continues to threaten the Gorge and the scenic area which all Americans own, but it threatens Spokane as well. Spokane County is a great example of the dangers that could happen to all communities. We have three major cities, Cheney, Spokane, and Spokane Valley in the county that each have deep circumstances if a train derails and catches fire to each community but also collectively. A rail accident in one of the communities would negatively impact not only that city, but all of Spokane County.

UP tracks run through these communities along with BNSF. Cheney has four at grade crossings, thousands of students (Eastern WA University and several schools), and almost the whole town is within a mile of the tracks.

Spokane's tracks run right through downtown and are elevated as well as running near I-90 and two major hospitals. The highest bridge in the County is above Hangman Creek which is not even a mile from the confluence with the Spokane River. The river is of great importance to Spokane. It is a part of our sole-source drinking aquifer, subsistence food

source for the Spokane Tribe as well as Hmong, Lao, Marshallese Islanders Russian and Ukrainians, recreation economy, and our hydropower system. It is the very heart of who we are as a city.

The city of Spokane Valley's section of our river is also endangered with rail bridges over the river, thousands of school kids, and only one above grade crossing. This is a conservative city but they officially opposed the building of the Vancouver Energy proposal at the Port of Vancouver. The noise, traffic, issues, safety and costs of the project will overwhelm Spokane Valley as it will Spokane and Cheney.

The UP expansion will only help facilitate our rail problems here in Spokane County and in many other up-rail communities. And we have to pay for upgrades. We get the costs and the burdens of this expansion and nothing else.

Sincerely,

Laura Ackerman

Organizer and Oil Policy Director

The Lands Council

25 W. Main. Ave. #222

Spokane, WA 99201

509 209-2404

lackerman@landscouncil.org