



November 2, 2016

Wasco County Board of Commissioners
Rod Runyon, Commissioner
Steve Kramer, County Commissioner
Scott Hege, County Commissioner

Submitted by email to: KathyW@co.wasco.or.us

Re: PLASAR-15-01-0004 PLASAR-15-01-000, UPRR Second Mainline Track Project – Wasco County, Oregon

The Oregon Chapter of the Sierra Club requests that the Wasco County Board of Commissioners reverse the decision of the Wasco County Planning Commission and deny the proposed development.

The basis for this denial is that the proposed development will inevitably lead to increased rail traffic volumes as your staff has pointed out in Attachment G of the Agenda Packet for this hearing:

“Staff Conclusion: The potential increase in market driven rail traffic afforded by the physical improvements to an existing bottleneck is difficult to predict. However, it is clear from application materials and testimony provided by UPRR staff at the Planning Commission hearings that the project will allow for a potential increase in traffic, if the market demanded it. The potential increase is a known factor and has direct nexus to potential impacts associated with the physical development proposed by UPRR. This confirms the nexus of the physical development to the Treaty Rights impacts and concerns expressed by the Umatilla and Yakama. As stated in (2) above, “uses that would affect or modify such rights shall be prohibited”.”

The Sierra Club believes that, based on the evidence presented, the County Commissioners will not be able to reach a finding that the proposed development “would not affect or modify treaty or other rights of any Indian tribe”.

In addition to the treaty rights impacts, the additional rail traffic will have impacts to the health and safety of not only the residents of Wasco County but to all of the people living in proximity to the railroad tracks between Hinkle and Portland, Oregon, and beyond. In protecting the treaty rights of the tribes, you will also protect the health and safety of thousands of people.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gregory P. Monahan, PhD".

Gregory P. Monahan, PhD,
Chair, Beyond Gas & Oil Team
Oregon Chapter, Sierra Club