



SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
Washington, DC 20423

Office of Environmental Analysis

June 8, 2018

Ms. Laura A. Shick
 Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist
 U.S. Department of Transportation
 Federal Railroad Administration
 Office of Railroad Policy and Development
 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
 Washington, DC 20590

Re: Docket No. FD 34936, Port of Moses Lake – Construction Exemption – in
 Grant County, Wash.; **Cooperating Agency Invitation**

Dear Ms. Schick:

I am writing to invite the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to participate as a cooperating agency in the preparation of a Supplemental Environmental Assessment (Supplemental EA) for the project described below.

In 2009, the Surface Transportation Board (Board) authorized the Port of Moses Lake (Port) to construct, acquire, and rehabilitate approximately 11.5 miles of rail line in and near the city of Moses Lake, Washington, as part of the Northern Columbia Basin Railroad Project (“NCBRP”).¹ The NCBRP involved three short segments of rail line: one to be constructed between the community of Wheeler and Parker Horn (Segment 1); one to be constructed between Columbia Basin Railroad Company, Inc. (CBRW) trackage and the east side of the Grant County International Airport (Segment 2); and one to be acquired from CBRW, and then upgraded, that runs approximately from Parker Horn near Stratford Road to near the Grant County International Airport (Segment 3), connecting to the other segments. Prior to the Board’s decision, the Board’s Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA)² prepared an EA which concluded that the project, as proposed, and with the mitigation measures recommended in the EA imposed, would not result in any significant environmental impacts.³

¹ Port of Moses Lake—Construction Exemption—Moses Lake, Wash., FD 34936 (STB served Aug. 27, 2009).

² OEA was formerly the Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA).

³ Port of Moses Lake—Construction Exemption—Moses Lake, Wash., FD 34936, Final Environmental Assessment (STB served May 8, 2009).

The Port now seeks authority to modify the previously approved alignment to reduce land use conflicts that have developed since the Board's 2009 decision. The Port proposes minor modifications that generally shift, straighten, shorten and add new curves to the previously approved alignment. Several of the proposed relocations depart between 400 and 1,800 feet from the original routing. According to the Port, these modifications should, among other things, reduce building take and gas line disturbances, avoid impacts to irrigation and newly constructed industrial buildings and mitigate truck queueing problems on various line segments. Because of the proposed changes to the alignment previously authorized by the Board, OEA has determined that a Supplemental EA is appropriate in this case.

Based on preliminary consultations for this project, OEA understands that the Port has requested federal funding from FRA. Therefore, consistent with 40 C.F.R. § 1501.6, we are inviting FRA to be a cooperating agency in the preparation of this Supplemental EA because of FRA's special expertise and jurisdiction by law.

If you have any questions, please contact Adam Assenza at 202-245-0301 (e-mail address: adam.assenza@stb.gov). Please confirm FRA's participation as a cooperating agency in writing by July 8, 2018. We look forward to your response and to working with you on the Supplemental EA for the Port's proposal.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Victoria Rutson".

Victoria Rutson
Director
Office of Environmental Analysis

CC: Lydia Kachadoorian
Adam Assenza
Danielle Gosselin