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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 23, 2008

Charles D. Nottingham
Chairman
Surface Transportation Board
395 E St., SW
Washington, DC 20423

Re: Docket No. AB-515 (Sub-No. 2X), *Central Oregon & Pacific Railroad, Inc. – Abandonment and Discontinuance – in Coos, Douglas, and Lane Counties, OR (Coquille to Vaughn)*

Dear Chairman Nottingham:

We are writing to request the Surface Transportation Board hold a field hearing in Oregon on the proposed abandonment of the Coos Bay rail line.

For decades, the 120 mile stretch of railroad between Coquille and Eugene has provided an essential transportation link for communities in southwestern Oregon. This service was abruptly halted in September 2007 when the Central Oregon & Pacific Railroad announced that it was embargoing the line due to unsafe tunnels on the rail line. The ongoing closure of the line has caused significant hardship for businesses in southwest Oregon and has put at risk hundreds of jobs in an economically depressed region in the state.

A field hearing would provide local businesses and officials an opportunity to voice their concerns to the Board regarding the proposed abandonment of the rail line, and for the Board to gain further insight and understanding to the importance of rail service to the local communities and the State.

Thank you for your consideration of our request and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,


Gordon H. Smith
United States Senate


Ron Wyden
United States Senate