



Eugene Area
Chamber of
Commerce

August 21, 2008

Mr. Charles Nottingham, Chairman
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street SW
Washington, DC 20423

RE: August 21, 2008 Public Hearing in Eugene, Oregon

Docket No. AB-515 (Sub-No. 2X). Central Oregon & Pacific Railroad Inc. – Abandonment and Discontinuation

Docket No. 35160 (Finance). Oregon International Port of Coos Bay – Feeder Line Application, Coos Bay Line of the Central Oregon & Pacific Railroad Inc.

Dear Chair Nottingham:

Thank you very much for the opportunity to comment on the future of the Central Oregon & Pacific Railroad.

The Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce is comprised of over 1,200 member businesses in Eugene and in fact from throughout the Eugene-Springfield metropolitan area in Lane County. Our mission is to promote a healthy local economy. And in doing so we have long recognized the important link between our transportation infrastructure with the health of our economy and with economic development opportunities that create more jobs for our citizens

I will limit my remarks to the issue of *Abandonment and Discontinuation* of the Central Oregon & Pacific Railroad. From our perspective we do not think it would be in the best interest of our local, regional, or state economy to abandon this rail line. Connectivity of transportation infrastructure will become even more important in the future with respect to moving freight or passengers. Therefore, we believe maintaining access to and from the deep water Oregon International Port of Coos Bay for importing and exporting purposes, or even passenger service, will be of significant importance to the future economy of this region and to the State of Oregon.

We think it is very important to preserve all options with respect to transportation connectivity needed to support our economy. From our point of view, not abandoning the rail line accomplishes that objective. Not abandoning the rail line will preserve that route for the future. And in our ever changing or expanding global markets it's hard to envision all potential opportunities that might exist someday. It would be very unfortunate to lose that potential at this point in time. Especially, because once lost it's doubtful there will be other connections linking inland markets with the Oregon International Port of Coos Bay, other than a highway system that can have its own limitations with respect to moving people, goods, and services.

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Chair Nottingham, on behalf of our membership I again want to thank you for providing this opportunity to comment on this important topic.

Sincerely,



Dave Hauser, CCE
President

cc: U.S. Senator Gordon Smith
U.S. Senator Ron Wyden
U.S. Representative Peter DeFazio
Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski