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Bruce Hanna

State Representative, District 7
House Republican Leader

AB-515 Sub 2
FD-35160

TESTIMONY TO SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

August 21, 2008

For the record, my name is Bruce Hanna, State Representative for House District 7, which includes a portion of the Coos Bay Line. I am also the Republican Leader in the Oregon House of Representatives.

I want to thank the board for holding this hearing, and for giving Oregonians the opportunity to talk about the importance of keeping the Coos Bay Line in operation.

The Coos Bay Line is a critical part of Oregon's efforts to be competitive in the global economy. In order to stay competitive, Oregon needs an effective and comprehensive rail system in order to transport our products to markets abroad.

Thanks to the work of our local, state, and federal leaders, Oregon has taken significant steps to improve our multi-modal transportation infrastructure. We have made significant investments in Southern Oregon, including investments to repair bridges on the Coos Bay Line.

Now is not the time to reverse these efforts.

Oregon will become less competitive in the global economy if this vital transportation link is allowed to disappear.

The closure of this line will directly threaten many businesses and the family wage jobs they provide to Oregonians. Southern Oregon cannot afford to lose more jobs, especially in natural resources industries.

The situation facing the Board is clear.

The Board can choose short-term gain by allowing a key infrastructure asset to be ripped apart and sold for scrap, or the Board can choose long-term investment in the future by preserving rail transportation for the entire region.

That is why I join many Oregonians here today in urging the Board to reject the proposed abandonment and discontinuation of service of the Coos Bay Line.

In order to protect the market, I also want to express my opposition to allowing CORP/RailAmerica to maintain ownership of the eastern portion of the line from Danebo to Vaughn. In addition, I urge the Board to support the feeder line application from the Port of Coos Bay, and allow the Port to acquire the line and restore it to operation.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to tell you about this important issue for the State of Oregon.