



LANE COUNTY

PUBLIC SERVICE BUILDING, 125 EAST 8TH AVENUE, EUGENE, OR 97401/(541) 682-4203/FAX (541) 682-4616

August 21, 2008

Testimony submitted to the Surface Transportation Board during its Eugene Hearing in the matter of Finance Docket No. 35160 *and* Docket No AB-515 (Sub-No. 2)

To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment today on this important issue. As Chair of the Lane County Board of Commissioners, I am submitting to the Surface Transportation Board a Resolution adopted on Wednesday, August 20, at our regular meeting. It outlines Lane County's position with regard to the items before you today.

In short, we oppose the request for Abandonment of the Coos Bay rail line made by the Central Oregon and Pacific Railroad, but support of the Feeder Line Application Made by the International Port of Coos Bay.

In coming to these positions, we have been influenced by a number of pertinent issues that we hope the Board will also consider in reaching its decision in these matters.

- The majority of the subject property in this case lies within Lane County (1183 of 1853 acres, or 64%). The line passes through several incorporated cities within Lane County, and abuts one Lane County Park as well as several properties otherwise owned by Lane County. Our interest in this matter is clear.
- The abrupt cessation of service by the Central Oregon and Pacific Railroad in September, 2007 forced shippers along the line to switch to utilizing trucks to move freight. This resulted in an addition of 1,100 truck trips monthly and an annual increase of ten percent in the consumption of diesel fuel statewide. The environmental and safety implications for Lane County residents are obvious.
- This is the only rail transportation link between the Southern Willamette Valley and Oregon's second busiest seaport. Preserving the right of way and reopening the line for rail transportation have obvious economic impacts for all of the communities in the region now and importantly, into the future.
- The subject line includes a large number of water crossings which for the most part would be left in place if abandonment is granted. Given the environmental and attractive nuisance implications that these structures pose when not regularly and properly maintained, we are concerned that these costs have not adequately been considered within the realm of these applications, specifically the environmental assessment performed by the Section of Environmental Analysis. In particular, one of our parks, the Ada County Park is adjacent to several large trestles that cross portions of Siltcoos Lake. We would expect assurance that these structures will not be forced into our ownership unless we are fully prepared to take ownership.

Respectfully submitted,

Faye Stewart, Chair
Lane County Board of Commissioners

W. J. B.

DRAFT - Legislative format

BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF LANE COUNTY, OREGON

RESOLUTION NO.

IN THE MATTER OF ADVISING THE SURFACE
TRANSPORTATION BOARD OF LANE
COUNTY'S OPPOSITION TO ABANDONMENT
OF THE COOS BAY LINE, SUPPORT OF
FEEDER LINE APPLICATION OF THE
INTERNATIONAL PORT OF COOS BAY AND
DEVELOPMENT OF RAILROAD
INFRASTRUCTURE TO SOUTHWEST
OREGON COMMUNITIES

WHEREAS; economic development, energy and climate considerations are paramount in decisions related to transportation in Oregon; and

WHEREAS; the preservation of existing transportation infrastructure provides for a diversity of modal opportunities for the residents and businesses of Lane County and Oregon; and

WHEREAS; Lane County maintains a working relationship with its partner counties across Oregon; and

WHEREAS; Lane County received a briefing from the International Port of Coos Bay (the "Port") on its long term plans in August 1, 2007, and pledged to continue open communications and opportunities for mutual gain; and

WHEREAS; Lane County is home to approximately 50 miles of track currently named the Coos Bay Line of the Central Oregon and Pacific Railroad; and

WHEREAS; the Central Oregon and Pacific Railroad suddenly and without notice ceased operations on the Coos Bay Line in September, 2007, and is now petitioning the United States Surface Transportation Board to abandon the line; and

WHEREAS; the Port has filed a feeder line application with the United States Surface Transportation Board to place the Coos Bay Line under the authority of the Port; and

WHEREAS; the Surface Transportation Board is meeting in Eugene on August 21, 2008, to discuss these issues, partially in response to a request from Lane County; and

WHEREAS; the loss of rail capacity at the Port threatens the economic investments of several Oregon firms, which combined provide between 700 to 800 family wage jobs in Lane, Coos and Douglas Counties; and

WHEREAS; the loss of rail capacity at the Port has been required replacement by 1100 truck trips per month, many of which are travelling into or through Lane County communities; and

WHEREAS; the loss of rail capacity at the Port reduces the ability of the Port to compete for further industrial development, the impact of which will be felt in Lane County communities;

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED THAT:

Lane County opposes Central Oregon and Pacific Railroad's proposed abandonment of the Coos Bay Line as being contrary to the interests of the citizens of Lane County, and it is further resolved that;

Lane County supports the Port's Feeder Line application filed with the Surface Transportation Board to acquire ownership and control of the Coos Bay Line as benefiting the interests of the citizens of Lane County, and it is further resolved that;

Chairman Faye Stewart and Commissioner Bill Fleenor will deliver Lane County's opposition to the proposed abandonment of the Coos Bay Line to the Surface Transportation Board hearing on August 21, 2008, and it is further resolved that;

Chairman Faye Stewart and Commissioner Bill Fleenor will deliver Lane County's support of the Feeder Line Application filed by the Port to the Surface Transportation Board hearing on August 21, 2008, and it is further resolved that;

Lane County will *encourage the development of economically viable and sustainable* ~~seek to further develop~~ railroad infrastructure in Lane County such that the movement of freight to Southwest Oregon communities and ocean ports is expedited, *provided that such infrastructure addresses the needs of those Lane County citizens most impacted by rail transit.*

Lane County will seek to initiate a regional dialogue among stakeholders to ensure that the development of rail infrastructure in Western Lane County, and the expenditure of any public funds on such infrastructure, provides an economic benefit to its citizens and ensures the safety of those most impacted by such development.

DATED this _____ day of _____, 2008.

Chair, Lane County Board of Commissioners

APPROVED AS TO FORM
Date _____ Lane County

OFFICE OF LEGAL COUNSEL

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Chair, Lane County Board of Commissioners

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OFFICE OF LEGAL COUNSEL