



June 13, 2016

Sarah E. Feinberg, Administrator  
Federal Railroad Administration  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Ms. Feinberg,

On behalf of the Columbia River Gorge Commission, I am writing to strongly support the position of Oregon's two Senators, other members of the Oregon Congressional delegation, and Oregon Governor Kate Brown calling for a moratorium on oil train transportation through the Columbia River Gorge until a full investigation of the June 3, 2016 derailment is completed and the cause of the derailment is identified and repaired. Furthermore, the Commission agrees with the Oregon Governor and members of the Congressional delegation that the Department of Transportation should identify alternate railroad routes that exclude oil and hazardous material trains through the National Scenic Area in order to prevent catastrophic accidents in the future and to fully protect the National Scenic Area as Congress intended.

As you are aware, a Union Pacific Railway train carrying toxic crude oil derailed in Mosier, Oregon on June 3, 2016. Four of the derailed cars caught fire near homes, schools and businesses, causing evacuations, depletion of municipal water supply, damage to waste treatment, and other unsafe conditions for the community, as well as pollution of the air and the water in the Columbia River. This derailment is the latest of several derailments in the National Scenic Area since its creation in 1986. For several years, residents and visitors to the Columbia River Gorge have expressed deep concerns about transporting oil and other hazardous materials by rail through this unique region because of the threats to human safety, valuable natural resources, and Native American treaty rights. Given the railroad tracks' proximity to the Columbia River, the seventh largest river in the U.S. with one of the most critically important salmon fisheries in the nation, an oil spill could have devastating consequences to the region's economy, threaten public safety and irreversibly degrade ecosystem functions of the natural resources.

The Columbia River Gorge was established as the largest National Scenic Area in the U.S. by Congress in 1986 in order to protect and enhance its special scenic, natural, cultural and recreation resources. In addition, the National Scenic Area Act required that the economy of the Columbia River Gorge be supported and protected where compatible with protection of scenic, natural, cultural and recreational resources. Oregon and Washington created the Columbia River Gorge Commission through a bi-state compact to implement the National Scenic Area Act. The

Commission members are appointed by the two Governors and six counties in the National Scenic Area, as well as a non-voting representative appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture from the U.S. Forest Service.

The Commission recently passed a resolution declaring our deep concern over the increase in fossil fuel transport through the National Scenic Area because of the very high risk to our communities and resources should an accident occur. The resolution is attached. We urge you to engage the Gorge community about the NSA's unique topographic, geological, meteorological and environmental conditions that affect rail transportation and the safety of the National Scenic Area and all who live in and use it.

Please let me know if you have questions or need any additional information about the National Scenic Area. I can be reached at [krystyna.wolniakowski@gorgecommission.org](mailto:krystyna.wolniakowski@gorgecommission.org) or by phone 509-713-9623.

Best Regards,

Krystyna U. Wolniakowski  
Executive Director  
Columbia River Gorge Commission

cc: Columbia River Gorge Commissioners  
Senator Jeff Merkley  
Senator Ron Wyden  
Congressman Earl Blumenauer  
Congresswoman Suzanne Bonamici  
Governor Kate Brown  
Governor Jay Inslee  
Robert Duff