

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4705  
December 14, 2016

The Honorable Anthony R. Foxx  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Foxx:

I strongly support the Port of Moses Lake's application to the U.S. Department of Transportation's FASTLANE Grant Program. Expansion of rail service to over 2,500 acres of industrial property through the Northern Columbia Basin Railroad Project is essential to enhancing and improving rail access to vital industries in the northern Columbia Basin area near Moses Lake, Washington.

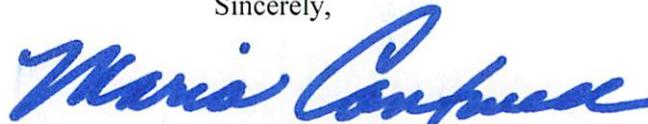
The Columbia Basin Railroad is a R2 freight corridor carrying between 1 and 5 million tons of freight per year and has been recognized by the Washington State Department of Transportation as the busiest short line in Eastern Washington. The railroad supports transport of over 10,000 carloads of locally produced agricultural and industrial product for 60 active rail shippers in the area. Approximately 7,000 family-wage jobs are connected to the industries that so heavily rely on rail to remain economically competitive.

Deteriorating rail infrastructure in the northern Columbia Basin area has prevented new opportunities for business expansion and regional economic growth. These inadequate facilities have prevented regional industries from fully utilizing potential rail lines to move goods, choosing instead to truck product to nearby distribution and storage facilities. Rehabilitation of existing rail lines to current standards, redirection of old lines away from Moses Lake's developing downtown core, and expansion of rail access to over 2,500 acres of industrial property is critical to retaining local manufacturers, providing opportunities for business expansion, and attracting new industries.

The proposed improvements would create direct service between the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) railway, vacant industrial land, and the Grant County International Airport, significantly improving the condition and resilience of rail infrastructure in Moses Lake. Removal of at-grade crossings and reduction of freight congestion through downtown Moses Lake is estimated to save shippers \$67 million in transportation costs by 2020. Access to reliable rail infrastructure is expected to take 186,000 trucks off the regional highway system and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 66 percent in the same time.

The Northern Columbia Basin Railroad Project is expected to generate between 13,000 and 19,000 new family wage jobs by increasing the efficiency of freight movement throughout the Columbia Basin. I gladly support the Port of Moses Lake's application to the FASTLANE Grant Program and I ask your full and fair consideration.

Sincerely,



Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator

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