



## Pacific NorthWest Economic Region

**2017 - 2018  
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March 8, 2018

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Walla Walla District  
Attn: Shane Slate  
Coeur d'Alene Regulatory Office  
1910 Northwest Boulevard, Suite 210  
Coeur d'Alene, Idaho 83814-2676

Dear Mr. Slate:

I am writing to encourage the prompt permitting approval for the Sandpoint Junction Connector Project over Lake Pend Oreille. The project would have wide-ranging benefits for the economy, trade, and transportation across the Pacific Northwest. It will benefit passenger trains such as Amtrak as well.

America's rail system has grown over the years to cover an expansive 140,000 mile-long network. Private investment from rail companies have enabled this growth and global leadership in rail. It is projects like the Sandpoint Junction Connector that allow the Northwest and America to benefit from a modernized rail system that powers trade and economic activity. Rail companies are well practiced at identifying choke points in the track network that slow the transfer of goods. The proposed project would solve exactly this issue. Currently, trains are forced to come to a complete stop at Lake Pend Oreille to allow oncoming traffic to cross the rail bridge first. The project would address this problem by permitting trains heading in opposite directions to cross at the same time, greatly cutting down on delays for local communities.

The project would not only make the current level of transport more efficient, but it would also lay the groundwork for future growth. There is clearly demand for increased rail capacity and if we don't work to address it now, problems will only multiply. Rail must be able to accommodate increases in trade and economic activity. The Sandpoint Junction Connector Project would do just that, ensuring the reliable and timely delivery of goods as our markets expand.

It is in the best interest of the local community, Idaho, and the region to approve this project in a timely manner.

Sincerely,

Matt Morrison  
Chief Executive Officer  
PNWER

\*Partial listing