



STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA
DENNIS DAUGAARD, GOVERNOR

April 10, 2018

Admiral Paul F. Zukunft
Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard
U.S. Coast Guard
2703 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20593-7000

Dear Mr. Zukunft,

I am writing to express support for the Sandpoint Junction Connector project. The project will provide the capacity needed for current traffic volumes and accommodate future growth on movements along BNSF's northern transcontinental main line, a nationally significant freight corridor. Of the over 130,000 carloads of agriculture BNSF hauled out of South Dakota, over half of those products traveled the northern transcontinental route, making it a critical transportation route for South Dakota's farmers and agriculture industry.

South Dakota always has been and will continue to be an agricultural state. It remains the common thread linking citizens, businesses, and communities of our state. South Dakota's agriculture industry has a \$25.6 billion economic impact each year and generates 20 percent of our state's economic activity. In 2017, BNSF shipped over 130,000 carloads of wheat, soybeans, corn, sweet beans, beans, and other agricultural products from South Dakota to plants around the country for domestic use and to ports for export abroad.

BNSF has invested nearly \$2 billion to expand capacity on the northern transcontinental route since 2013. The one-lane bridge at Sandpoint remains a critical chokepoint in the network. The proposed Sandpoint Junction Connector project adds capacity and alleviates that chokepoint to allow enhanced movement of freight, including South Dakota's agricultural products.

I am concerned incorrect information about this project and the type of rail traffic it supports could cause a delay in the project. Agriculture products and consumer goods are the largest commodity groups delivered through the Sandpoint project area, both critical to South Dakota's economy.

This project is in the interest of all communities and shippers that depend on a robust rail transportation corridor. I am confident your agency will conduct a thorough review and analysis of the proposal in a timely fashion.

Sincerely,



Dennis Daugaard

DD:rg

CC:

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