



C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER  
GOVERNOR

April 9, 2018

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

Lt. Gen. Todd T. Semonite  
Chief of Engineers  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
441 G. St. NW  
Washington, DC 20314-1000

**Re: Sandpoint Junction Connector Project; Application No. NWW 2007-1303**

Gentlemen,

I am writing today to express my strong support for the timely and positive consideration of BNSF Railway's proposed Sandpoint Junction Connector project in northern Idaho. Final approval cannot come too soon for this crucial effort to reduce rail congestion, enhance safety and improve service for shippers in Idaho and throughout the northern tier of states.

In light of comments submitted by others in response to the project application, I felt it was important to supplement my March 5, 2018, letter in support of the project (copy attached). Frankly, a lengthy and expensive environmental impact statement process, rather than conducting a more appropriate and timely environmental analysis, would mean unnecessary delays in addressing a critical chokepoint and providing much-needed capacity to a nationally significant freight corridor.

BNSF has invested \$2 billion since 2013 to expand capacity on the northern transcontinental route, including construction of more than 150 miles of double track on the corridor. This investment has been driven in part by record demand to move agricultural products by rail. BNSF transported 1.4 million carloads in Idaho last year. Agricultural commodities, consumer products, mixed merchandise and Amtrak trains make up 74 percent of the traffic over Lake Pend Oreille.

I am concerned that incorrect information about this project and the rail traffic it supports could cause a delay to the project. The added capacity brought by the Sandpoint project will allow BNSF to provide more reliable service for existing customers and future growth. Freight

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volumes will be determined by the needs of customers. Through this project, BNSF is ensuring it is prepared to handle those demands today and in the future.

This project is in the interest of all communities and shippers that depend on a robust rail transportation corridor. I am confident your agencies will conduct a thorough review and analysis of the proposal without undue delay. Thank you for your consideration.

As Always – Idaho, “Esto Perpetua”

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C.L. Butch Otter". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "C.L." written in a smaller, more compact style than the last name "Otter".

C.L. "Butch" Otter  
Governor of Idaho

Cc: U.S. Coast Guard, District 13 Bridge Administration  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Walla Walla District