

March 13, 2018

Steven M. Fischer
Thirteenth Coast Guard District
915 - 2nd Avenue, Room 3510
Seattle, WA 98174

RE: APPLICATION NO: NWW-2007-01303
WATERWAY: Sand Creek and Lake Pend Oreille
APPLICANT: BNSF Railway Company

Dear Mr. Fischer:

The Idaho Association of Commerce & Industry (IACI) is Idaho's largest and most active business trade organization representing members from all across Idaho in a wide variety of commercial and industrial activities. BNSF Railway is an outstanding member of our organization committed to the mission of safe and efficient movement of products and raw materials in the United States.

We are writing in support of their application for the Sandpoint Junction Connector project, which will improve the efficiency of rail travel through northern Idaho but, most importantly, improve the human and environmental safety in the area. Clearly, BNSF is making a commitment to that safety through the investment of millions of dollars into the improvements of their rail system. This factor is critical to ensure the long-term viability and environmental protection of the corridor, which is critical to the region and to the state of Idaho and all of our members that use multiple modes of transportation options.

With the expansion of the project will come shorter wait times, improving air quality in the area by allowing trains to run in both directions, reducing the need for engineers to stop as they wait for clearance to cross. In turn, this project will mean shorter wait times on nearby roads and streets that cross BNSF tracks. Shorter wait times for autos and trains means less idling, and that is an improvement in efficiency and environmental quality.

In addition, the new rail will be the most technologically sophisticated and safest in the industry. This is a critical factor when moving products across Lake Pend Oreille. Making the lake crossing more stable and efficient using this latest technology available will improve the overall environmental safety of the track.

We strongly encourage approval of the BNSF application. IACI and its membership stand with BNSF and their willingness to invest in the economy and, at the same time, improve the environment and the safety of transportation in Idaho.

Sincerely,



Alex LaBeau
President

