



March 12th, 2018

Sharon Bosley
Kootenai Environmental Alliance and Lake Coeur d'Alene Waterkeeper
Executive Director
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TO: U.S. Army Corp of Engineers

RE: Application NO. NWW-2007-01303; Proposed rail bridge over Lake Pend Oreille

Dear Mr. Slate,

I am writing you today, on behalf of the members of Kootenai Environmental Alliance and the Lake Coeur d'Alene Waterkeeper, to request an extension to the public comment period for the proposed second rail bridge over Lake Pend Oreille. We request that you extend the comment period to 120 days so that our members will have enough time to review the permit application and generate thoughtful comments regarding your proposal.

We believe our members would be inclined to attend and share their concerns for this project if you were able to offer public hearings in Sandpoint. Many of our members live and recreate in Lake Pend Oreille and have great concerns about increasing the amount of rail traffic over this important waterbody.

A second rail bridge over Lake Pend Oreille could double the current rail traffic. This increase in rail traffic could lead to an increase in accidents in our watershed. Last year alone we saw 67 rail cars derail within our region, one of which was a coal car derailment along the Clark Fork River. Derailments not only can have a detrimental effect on our environment, but also could be life threatening depending on the cargo. Light crude oil is extremely flammable and dangerous in case of a spill.

The south end of Lake Pend Oreille lies over the Spokane Valley-Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer. Lake Pend Oreille is one of the major contributors to recharging of the aquifer. This aquifer is the sole source of water for most people in Spokane County, Washington and Kootenai County. It is the only affordable source of drinking water in a bi-state region serving water to more than 500,000 people every day.

Oil spills are hard to contain and it is uncertain our communities are fully prepared to address the environmental cleanup from an oil spill into Lake Pend Oreille. Additionally, coal dust released

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from rail cars can introduce lead, arsenic and mercury into our watershed as they travel through our area. Inhalation of coal dust can also expose individuals to toxic heavy metals and increase asthma. The air pollution from coal dust and diesel exhaust can lead to many detrimental health effects including cardiovascular disease, lung cancer and more.

Please consider our request to extend the comment period from 30 to 120 days as well as offer public hearings in the Sandpoint area.

Sincerely,
Sharon Bosley
Executive Director
Kootenai Environmental Alliance and Lake Coeur d'Alene Waterkeeper

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