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JOINT COMMITTEE ON TAXATION

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

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May 30, 2018

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

Dear Admiral Zukunft:

I write in support of a timely review of the BNSF's proposed Sandpoint Junction Connector Project along the railway's Great Northern Corridor in North Idaho near Sandpoint.

North Idaho is a conduit for transportation and commerce in the Northwestern United States, everyday moving passengers throughout the region and important agricultural commodities to markets both domestic and overseas. However, as rail traffic volume continues to increase, the existing bridge over Lake Pend Orielle has become a cause for delays, narrowing to a single track over the lake. The subsequent effect is bottleneck of goods waiting to move to market, and lengthened wait times for Idaho drivers at local rail crossings.

Authorizing the construction of a second, parallel bridge on Lake Pend Orielle will enable a freer flow of the commodities on which northern Idaho's rural economies depend and have a positive impact on local road traffic. BNSF has invested well over \$100 million in recent years in North Idaho, including several double-tracking projects, and demonstrated a commitment to environmental protections in doing so. Increasing rail capacity through Sandpoint will not only have a positive impact on the local community, but on economies stretching from the Great Lakes to the Pacific Northwest.

Once again, I offer my support for the USCG's timely consideration of the proposed Sandpoint Junction Connector project. I have confidence that the federal agencies of jurisdiction will work with state and local authorities to see that state and federal laws are faithfully adhered to throughout this process.

Sincerely,



Mike Crapo
United States Senator

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