



Pend Oreille County

Board of Commissioners

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July 5, 2016

Washington State Department of Transportation
Rail, Freight & Ports Division
PO Box 47407
Olympia, WA 98504-7407

To Freight Rail Assistance Program Review Committee:

We are pleased to support the application of the Port of Pend Oreille (dba Pend Oreille Valley Railroad – POVA) for a grant from the Freight Rail Assistance Program. The application will allow for necessary track rehabilitation, ensuring dependable freight mobility, supporting the regional economy, and reducing impacts to the roadways and environment.

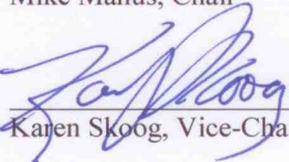
The track rehabilitation project is vital to our local economy as it directly supports one of our county's largest employers, Ponderay Newsprint Company. Ponderay Newsprint Company employs 145 individuals in Pend Oreille County and relies heavily upon the dependable and affordable service of POVA for the transportation of its newsprint and chemicals. The uncertainty of rail rehabilitation and cost of trucking would likely lead to the closure of Ponderay Newsprint Company, as relocation of the facility is economically unfeasible and the parent company could make up production at its other facilities. The economic impact of a closure would be felt immensely by our community, the state's second most economically distressed country. With our unemployment rate hovering around 10.5%, the county simply cannot afford the loss of these jobs or the property tax revenue.

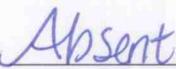
The rehabilitation project request is one that has the support of Pend Oreille County and the local businesses that rely upon the railroad. The need for funding is urgent and we appreciate your consideration of our letter. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at (509) 447-4119.

Sincerely,

Pend Oreille County
Board of Commissioners


Mike Manus, Chair


Karen Skoog, Vice-Chair


Stephen Kiss, Commissioner