



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF OREGON**

February 10, 2013

To: Representative Jules Bailey, Chair
House Committee on Energy and Environment

From: Robin Wisdom, President
Theresa Gibney, Natural Resources Volunteer

Re: HJM 201– **Safer standards for new and existing tank rail cars: SUPPORT**

The League of Women Voters is a grassroots nonpartisan, political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. Since the 1960's, the League has been at the forefront of national efforts to protect air, land and water resources. The League's position is that members work to "Preserve the physical, chemical and biological integrity of the ecosystem, with maximum protection of public health and the environment" with a focus on demanding pollution prevention.

Our testimony in support of HJM 201 is consistent with the League's national position and focus on pollution prevention, rather than rapid cleanup and post-spill settlements.

With the production of domestic oil in Montana and North Dakota, increased rail shipment of crude oil has already begun. Record volumes of oil are moving by rail and four derailments have occurred in the last six months. Because rail lines go through highly populated areas ("Rail built the West – rail built the towns"), the potential for human tragedy is high.

The North Dakota resource is not the only resource expected to put pressure on our rail shipping systems. The Institute for Energy Research projects that production will continue to accelerate and that future oil shale reserves in the interior states of Utah, Wyoming, New Mexico, and Colorado will be extracted. Bloomberg News and several other national publications quote industry projections that the US will surpass Saudi Arabia as the world's largest producer by 2020. This is now, not far in the future, and it is important that regulation of improved rail tank car safety take place immediately.

As such, HJM 201 is a timely and relevant effort to prevent the public and environmental tragedy that can accompany derailments and other accidents associated with insufficient rail tank car standards and shipping practices.

The League of Women Voters urges your support of HJM 201.