



To: Chair Vega Pederson and Members of the House Committee on Energy and Environment

Date: April 9th, 2015

Re: Support for HB 3225

Oil train traffic poses an acute and growing risk to the residents of Multnomah County. These risks include:

- the potential for oil train explosions, or spills as a result of derailment;
- increased particulate emissions from locomotive exhaust;
- congestion and collision along roadways and rail lines; and
- associated health impacts including injury and death.

It is reasonable and prudent to ask that the railways profiting from the transport of hazardous materials pay for measures that ameliorate these public risks to the maximum extent practicable. Oil trains moving through the state of Oregon will pass through Multnomah County, traveling along rail corridors that are adjacent to critical infrastructure and, more alarmingly, dense residential neighborhoods.

Shipments of crude-by-rail carry the potential for grave risk to people, property and the environment. Specifically the risk from fire and explosions has increased exponentially when the traditional 111 rail cars began transporting Bakken sweet crude. These cars are not designed to meet the hazard this oil poses and while the design of the rail cars themselves fall outside of the State's ability to regulate, we do have the ability to mitigate the hazard through reduction of speed, increased safety inspectors and inspections, as well as equipping the local fire districts with adequate suppression resources and training. This bill begins to address these important safety issues. At this time, no fire district in Oregon is adequately equipped and few are trained to deal with a derailment that involves a sweet crude explosion involving crude rail cars.

Fossil fuel transport in our state will also further exacerbate environmental injustices faced by vulnerable communities living near rail lines. A Multnomah County Health Department analysis from February 2013 found that almost one-third of Multnomah County's population lives within 2 km of rail lines. Roughly one in nine County residents live within 500 m of these rail lines. The demographics of this area show that people of color make up a larger portion of the population in areas near rail lines than they do in the County as a whole.

Oregon is not adequately prepared to respond to the increased danger of oil trains in our communities. The State must act to protect the health and safety of local residents, the environmental and cultural resources of the Columbia River. Multnomah County urges passage of HB 3225.

If you have questions regarding Multnomah County's support for HB 3225, please contact Chris Fick in Multnomah County's Office of Government Relations at chris.fick@multco.us.