



To: Chair Helm and Members of the House Committee on Energy and Environment
From: John Wasiutynski, Director, Office of Sustainability
Date: May 15, 2017
Re: Support for HB 3344 & 2131

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

- 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 railways transporting 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 dense residential neighborhoods.

Shipments of crude-by-rail carry the potential for risk to people, property and the environment. Specifically the risk from fire and explosions 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.

In January 2016 Multnomah County completed a risk assessment of crude-by-rail shipment through the county (attached), which shows that more than 25% of Multnomah County's population lives within one-half mile of rail lines that are used by crude-by-rail trains. People of color are overrepresented in the one-half mile impact zone, making crude-by-rail an environmental justice issue for Multnomah County. In addition, 108 schools, 100 childcare centers, and \$25 billion dollars of improved property lay within the one-half mile area surrounding crude by-rail lines. Finally, while one-half mile is recommended by the Oregon Fire Marshal as the evacuation area from a crude-by-rail fire, a fire would release a toxic plume placing people's health at risk for much greater distances.

A summary of the risk assessment findings include the following details:

- Up to 12 trains a week carry 1,000,000 gallons of crude oil through Multnomah County.
- More than a quarter of the Multnomah County population lives within the half-mile “evacuation zone” around the oil transport route.
- 108 schools and 100 childcare facilities are within the evacuation zone.
- People of color are more likely to live within a half-mile of a rail line.
- Over \$25 billion dollars of improved property is within a half-mile of rail lines in Multnomah County.
- The potential negative impacts of an oil train accident are heightened due to the volatility of the oil and the special equipment needed to extinguish it.
- Proposed new or expanded oil facilities in the NW will increase volumes of OBR transiting through Multnomah County.
- The lifting of the US oil export ban in 2015 is likely to increase pressure for new or expanded oil facilities in the Northwest.
- Emergency responders do not have adequate equipment to respond to a large-scale OBR emergency.
- New safety requirements for rail cars carrying crude oil won’t be fully implemented until 2025.

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 3344 & 2131.