

Smith Holly

From: Michael Lang <Michael@gorgefriends.org>
Sent: Friday, April 07, 2017 12:22 PM
To: Rep Helm; Rep Johnson; Rep Marsh; Rep Power; Rep Reschke; Rep Holvey; Rep Bentz; Rep.PhilBarnhart@state.or.us; Rep Smith D
Cc: Rep Smith Warner; Smith Holly
Subject: Safety Defects on Oil Train Routes Underscore Need for Passing Oregon Rail and Terminal Legislation

Dear Chair Helm and Members of the House Energy and Environment Committee,

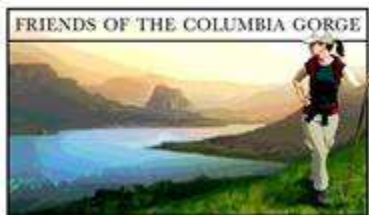
I would like to share this recent report, below, regarding safety violations on oil train routes. Friends of the Columbia Gorge is very appreciative of your interest in passing common sense legislation to address oil-by-rail emergency response and oil terminals. We hope that you are able to pass HB 2131 and HB 3344 out of committee.

Best regards,

Michael Lang
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<https://gorgefriends.org/news-events/news/2017-04-05/safety-defects-on-oil-train-routes-underscores-need-for.html>

Safety Defects on Oil Train Routes Underscores Need for Passing Oregon Rail Legislation



June 2016 file photo provided by the Oregon Department of Transportation showing south train rail tie plates and lag bolts at the site of a fiery June 3, 2016 train derailment in Mosier, OR.

Wednesday, April 5, 2017

Friends of the Columbia Gorge Media Response

Contact: Michael Lang, (503) 490-3979

For immediate release

[According to a story released today by the Associated Press](#), federal rail inspectors uncovered 24,000 rail defects on oil train routes across the country. Many similar defects led to derailments, fires and oil spills in Mosier, OR, Virginia, Montana and elsewhere.

This report highlights the need to pass legislation pending in Oregon to address oil trains and terminals. [HB 2131](#) or the Mosier Act of 2017 would require state approval of oil train emergency response plans, fees on railroads to fund emergency response, and insurance requirements to cover worst-case derailments and spills. Companion legislation ([HB 3344](#)) would require closer scrutiny of proposed oil terminals in Oregon. Both of these bills received hearings on March 13 and are awaiting further action in the Oregon House of Representatives.

“Oregon has the weakest laws on the West Coast for oil trains and terminals,” said Steve McCoy, Staff Attorney for Friends of the Columbia Gorge. “Oil by rail is fundamentally unsafe, but Oregon needs to pass these bills to better protect our communities and special places like the Columbia River Gorge.”

On June 3, 2016, a Union Pacific oil train derailed in Mosier within the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. The derailment spilled 42,000 gallons of crude oil, creating a fire that burned for 14 hours and leaking oil into the Columbia River and the surrounding groundwater. The town of Mosier was saved only because of the unusually calm winds in otherwise one of the windiest spots in the Columbia Gorge. The Federal Railroad Administration determined ([view report](#)) that Union Pacific caused the accident due to inadequate maintenance of its tracks and poor inspections.

"Now is the time to pass common sense oil train legislation," said Mosier Mayor Arlene Burns. "We must do all we can to protect the communities along the tracks from derailments of dangerous cargo. Mosier's derailment reiterates how crucial it is to be proactive."

“Our region must lead to protect our communities and waterways from the devastating impacts of oil spills and derailments. Passing consequential legislation this year is now only the right thing to do but, as this reports shows, an absolute necessity,” said Rebecca Ponzio, Campaign Director of Stand Up To Oil.

Read More

April 5, The Oregonian: [Thousands of defects found on oil train routes, including in Oregon](#)

April 5, KGW Ch. 8: <http://www.kgw.com/news/local/inspectors-find-24k-defects-in-oil-train-tracks-nationwide/428823752>

April 6, Portland Business Journal: [Report: Union Pacific fared worst in oil-train route inspections](#)