



February 7, 2019

Re: HB 2209

Dear Chair Evans and Committee Members,

Please accept this testimony on behalf of Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR) and our 2,000 members and supporters. Dr. McCormick is working and unable to testify in person.

My name is Maria McCormick and I work with Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility. I am a Family Physician and I have practiced medicine in Hood River for the last 16 years. My husband and I own a farm in Mosier Oregon. My children attended Mosier School and my younger son was an 8th grader when the June 3rd, 2016 train carrying Bakken crude oil derailed and caught fire 600 feet from the playground with school in session.

In retrospect, I realize that the Mosier oil train derailment was a predictable catastrophe. Mosier and Oregon were lucky that day. Unfortunately, as oil continues to travel by rail, we can count on the fact that there will be more accidents and perhaps far worse events similar to the 2013 Lac Megantic oil train derailment that killed 47 people, displaced 2000 people from their homes, and destroyed much of the downtown

core of that town.

Besides the obvious potential for loss of life from an oil train accident, the health hazards of exposure to crude oil during spill and cleanup efforts include neurotoxicity, cancer, lung disease, loss of cognitive function, and endocrine disruption. The dispersant chemicals used in cleanup are also highly toxic and are associated with increased risks of cancer, lung and endocrine diseases. Oil spills contaminating water reduce the viability of our local healthy food choices and can lead to digestive and reproductive health risks. In Mosier's specific case, the oil spill contaminated the waste water treatment plant, rendering the town sewage system inoperable with residents unable to flush their toilets after the derailment until cleanup efforts kicked into gear.

The cleanup after the 2016 derailment took months in Mosier. Now imagine an oil train derailment in Oregon in which lives are lost and catastrophic environmental and property damage occurs. How can we be sure that there is enough money set aside to cover the costs of a multi million dollar cleanup effort?

In my work as a primary care physician, I know that prevention is the best route to good health. In a similar vein, the railroads should be doing their best to prevent train accidents through regular maintenance and inspection of their lines. But I am also very mindful of the fact that chronic disease, unpredictable health events, and accidents occur.

In the case of health care, most of us are covered by medical insurance to assist with unexpected healthcare costs. Physicians themselves carry malpractice insurance. The

state of Oregon requires those of us who drive things much smaller than trains to carry insurance. It should go without saying that railroads and the oil companies whose hazardous materials the railroads carry should have sufficient insurance in place to pay for the multimillion dollar massive clean up when systems fail and an accident occurs.

Please amend HB 2209 to:

- Secure adequate insurance for railroads to cover true worst-case oil train derailments and oil spills. HB 2209 only requires insurance for damages resulting from a spill and fire of 15% of the capacity of an oil train;
- Provide strong rule-making authority for the Environmental Quality Commission for review and approval of contingency plans and training for oil train-related spills;
- Impose fees on railroads to improve oil spill response and establish funding for emergency preparedness; and
- Secure 24-hour notice for oil trains passing through Oregon to allow emergency responders to prepare.

Please ensure that H.B. 2209 is strengthened to include these priorities so that Oregon communities are not left vulnerable.

Thank you for your service to our great state and its citizens.

Maria McCormick MD

Thank you for consideration of her request and ours,

Regna Merritt

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Dr. Andy Harris

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Dr. Patrick OHerron

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