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To: Members of the House Committee on Veterans and Emergency Preparedness

From: Rhett Lawrence, Oregon Chapter Sierra Club

Date: February 7, 2019

RE: House Bill 2209

Chair Evans and Members of the Committee: Good afternoon, my name is Rhett Lawrence and I'm the Conservation Director for the Oregon Chapter of the Sierra Club. On behalf of our more than 20,000 members in Oregon, I am pleased to be able to testify before you today about House Bill 2209.

As an organization with a long history working to move beyond fossil fuels in Oregon, we appreciate the efforts of Chair Evans and this committee to improve the regulation of hazardous oil trains in our state. After the devastating oil train derailments in Mosier, Oregon, and Lac Megantic, Quebec, it is clear that we must take action in our state to prevent further disasters here.

We believe this bill and several others that have been introduced this session could institute significant, common sense steps to address oil train safety in Oregon, which has the weakest oil train laws on the west coast. And in addition to the safety issues, the Sierra Club also has concerns about the climate impacts of perpetuating the transport of dirty and dangerous fossil fuels through Oregon. We cannot allow our state to become an unregulated throughway for these materials.

While HB 2209 is a step in the right direction, if we are to truly protect Oregonians from hazardous oil trains, we believe this bill would need to be amended to:

- Strengthen oil spill contingency plans
- Require the railroads to pay fees for emergency response
- Require railroads to carry enough insurance to cover a true worst-case spill involving an entire trainload of oil under the worst conditions
- Require 24-hour notification of oil trains passing through the state

Such an approach has been proposed in HB 2858, which we believe provides the best approach to oil train regulation in Oregon. That bill's provisions largely mirror the approach taken in Washington State, which has been shown to be effective. Amending HB 2209 to include these measures would establish consistent oil train emergency response across state lines and better protect waterways and communities across Oregon.

Again, we thank Chair Evans and this committee for introducing this bill and starting the conversation about oil trains safety in the 2019 session. We urge you to further strengthen the bill to bring Oregon's laws up to date in protecting the safety of our communities and protecting our environment. Thank you very much for considering my comments and I'd be happy to answer any questions.