

I come to you tonight with a capital funding request of \$4.5 million for a pedestrian overpass. This request is one of Rep. levy's top 3 in her district. ODOT Rail has already contributed \$2.3 million for design work, so this ask is just for construction funding.

The City of Echo is a small rural community in eastern Oregon and with a largely underserved population. At one time the city was a hub for the railroad, but now like most small towns it's a pass through and a rail car storage on a regular basis. The train tracks split our community in half, cutting off children and community members when the trains are parked and or stored on the sidetrack. When this occurs the current pedestrian crossing that serves the school district is blocked so children are forced to either crawl through the train on to a live rail, which is usually what they do, or walk an extra half mile to get to school. We have had way too many close calls and one fatality some years ago. When the trains are left blocking the crossing or crossings, the signal bells go off for hours and even days leaving the community to listen around the clock.

It is our strong belief that as community and state leaders we have a responsibility to protect our children and community members to the best of our abilities. This project would go a long way towards doing that in Echo and would be a permanent fix to the problem in our school zone. The crossing will be built to the highest standards possible, and all accessibility concerns addressed as a top priority.

In closing, while you have so many priorities this session to way in the budget, I ask you please to consider this project to be a high priority for community safety in rural Oregon and most of all doing everything we can to keep our children safe.

Thank you,  
David Slaght  
City Administrator-Recorder  
City of Echo