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April 30, 1999

Secretary, Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission
P O Box 47250
Olympia, Washington 98504-7250

RE: Railroad Company Operations Rulemaking
Docket No. TR-981102

Thank you for your letter of April 1, 1999 regarding the Railroad Company. This is of deep concern to me since I lost my husband July 29, 1998 in a horrible fire at Tokio, Washington, which was started by the railroad under sheer negligence. Besides losing my wonderful husband and a father and grandfather, it burned 20,000 acres, 2 combines, 1 tractor, 1 plow, and one truck. The railroad had no firetrucks or fire prevention to control this fire. They did not call in the fire to the fire department, even though it had started burning several hours earlier. Not one of their employees helped fight the fire. Of course we are in an ugly lawsuit now and the railroad still will not admit to negligence. We are very disappointed in their actions.

My family, all area farming communities and I want some very strict regulations to go into effect so this will never happen again. My son, two grandsons, their two girlfriends, our hired man and his family narrowly escaped death too. It is the most traumatic thing we have ever gone through and we will probably never get over it.

Regarding the first four questions:

1. What are the statutes.
2. The rules may be written and organized, but why do they not adhere to them?
3. I believe they need to be repealed and the railroad held responsible for any negligence they may cause.
4. No, I do not believe they do. Too many fires have been started by the same careless mistakes with no penalties to the railroad.

Regarding the next seven comments:

1. Our small communities definitely need to be advised of the railroad activity and all matters concerning the activities.
2. Yes.

April 30, 1999

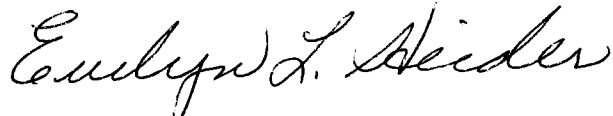
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3. Something has to be done about all the blocked crossings that have taken place. It is an extreme hazard to have these closed during the hot summer months when harvest is taking place. It is an extreme burden to the farmers and everyone in our area.
 4. I would like our commissioners to have a copy of all maintenance requirements and standards.
 5. Yes, to all of these.
 6. Yes
 7. Yes.
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In regards to the last three items, it is our hope all fire districts and law enforcement officers will get copies of the regulations and rules so they will be able to enforce them and the railroad will be held accountable and have to pay high fines for their negligence.

Thank you for your time. Please send any further notices and information about this rulemaking.

Sincerely,



Evelyn L. Heider