



SKAGIT COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

DON MUNKS, First District
KENNETH A. DAHLSTEDT, Second District
SHARON D. DILLON, Third District

May 14, 2007

Carole Washburn, Executive Secretary
Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission
1300 South Evergreen Park Drive, SW
P.O. Box 47250
Olympia, WA 98504-7250

Re: Reference No. TR-070696
BNSF Railway Petition to Close Hickox Road At-Grade Rail Crossing

Dear Ms. Washburn:

The purpose of this letter is to give official comment to the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission on the proposed closure of the Hickox Road rail crossing in south Mount Vernon. The Board of Skagit County Commissioners is opposed to the closure of the Hickox Road rail crossing for the following reasons:

- The Hickox rail crossing provides safety and economic benefits to residents and businesses in the south Mount Vernon area. The closure would affect emergency response negatively.
- Interstate 5 from Conway to Cook Road is being studied to determine improvements to interchanges. A full interchange at Hickox Road is an obvious improvement to the infrastructure and would provide economic development opportunity to the south Mount Vernon commercial zone. Closure of the Hickox Road rail crossing would stifle this opportunity and preclude BNSF participation in future infrastructure improvements. Cost to taxpayers would be increased.
- There are no other public rail crossings in Mount Vernon's Urban Growth Area (UGA) south of Blackburn Road so the availability of this crossing is crucial to safety and economic development.

SKAGIT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING

1800 CONTINENTAL PLACE, SUITE 100, MOUNT VERNON, WA 98273 PHONE (360) 336-9300 FAX (360)336-9307

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DON MUNKS, WASH.
UTIL. AND TRANSP.
COMMISSIONER

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May 14, 2007

Letter: Carole Washburn, Executive Secretary

- The Hickox rail crossing is a vital crossing to the agricultural community south of Mount Vernon in that it provides direct route to transport agricultural products to the urbanized areas for processing and marketing.

In summary, this proposed closure would reduce access to all of Mount Vernon's southern UGA, reduce response time for emergency vehicles, limit options for the existing transportation grid and increase taxpayer costs in the future, and limit Mount Vernon's ability to attract commercial development.

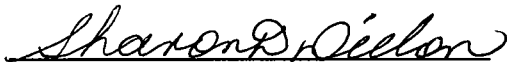
The plan to close the Hickox Road crossing appears to be poorly conceived and did not take into consideration some much better alternatives. One of the best alternatives is to put in the second rail and construct a crossing such as the one at Blackburn. Citizen safety would be preserved, emergency services would not be negatively impacted, vehicle access would be preserved, and Mount Vernon's commercial development opportunities would be enhanced. One of the most important considerations is that it would not limit future options for the transportation grid. True, this option would be more expensive than merely closing the crossing; however, the investment would pay off handsomely in the future.

Skagit County does not support petition TR-070696 and requests that a hearing be scheduled.

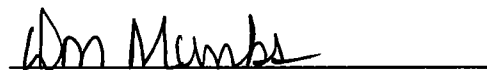
Attached is a copy of Resolution No.R20060256 signed by the Board of Skagit County Commissioners on July 31, 2006 in opposition to the proposed closure of Hickox Road BNSF rail crossing.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments and request for a public hearing.

Sincerely,



Sharon D. Dillon, Chair



Don Munks, Commissioner



Kenneth A. Dahlstedt, Commissioner

BCC/jjj
Enclosure

RESOLUTION NO. _____

**RESOLUTION IN OPPOSITION TO THE PROPOSED CLOSURE OF
HICKOX ROAD #70000 RAIL GRADE CROSSING**

WHEREAS, the Board of Skagit County Commissioners received notice of the Washington Department of Transportation's (WSDOT) proposed closure of the Hickox Road (#70000) rail grade crossing with the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) railway; and,

WHEREAS, Skagit County Public Works received a draft Impact Analysis from WSDOT regarding said closure, proposed in order to facilitate expansion of the existing side track in south Mount Vernon; and,

WHEREAS, the Board of Skagit County Commissioners received public comment regarding said closure from Fire District 3, the agricultural community, and affected landowners; and,

WHEREAS, having considered the draft Impact Analysis, as well as public comment, the Board of Skagit County Commissioners wishes to state its opposition to the closure of the BNSF rail grade crossing on Hickox Road;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Skagit County Commissioners hereby opposes the closure of the Hickox Road #70000 rail grade crossing with the BNSF rail line and encourages WSDOT to seek any and all alternatives to said closure.

PASSED this 31st day of July, 2006.



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
SKAGIT COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Kenneth A. Dahlstedt
Kenneth A. Dahlstedt, Chairman

ABSENT

Ted W. Anderson, Commissioner

Don Munks
Don Munks, Commissioner

ATTEST Melissa Collins Assistant
~~Jeanne Giesbrecht~~ Clerk of the Board

LEAP Transportation Document 2006-C, Rail Capital Program (Y), As Developed on March 8th, 2006
 Program - Rail Capital Program (Y)

Route	DTN	Project Title	Leg Dist	Refer	05-07	07-09	09-11	11-13	13-15	Future	Total
999	P01007C	HIGH SPEED CROSSOVERS-TEMINO Multimodal Account - State (2003)	20	0	0	3,875	0	0	0	0	3,875
999	P01010A	High Speed Crossovers - Chabalis Jct Multimodal Account - State (2005)	20	0	0	0	0	0	3,900	0	3,900
999	P01010B	High Speed Crossovers - Newakum Multimodal Account - State (2005)	18,20	0	0	0	0	0	3,498	0	3,498
999	P01010C	HIGH SPEED CROSSOVERS-WINLOCK Multimodal Account - State (2003)	20	0	3,925	0	0	0	0	0	3,925
999	P01100A	Bellingham-GP Area Upgrades Multimodal Account - State (2003)	42	20	0	180	0	0	0	0	200
999	P01101A	MT. VERNON SIDING UPGRADE Multimodal Account - State (2003)	10	1,330	2,478	0	0	0	0	0	3,808
999	P01102A	PA JCT. TO DELTA JCT. SPEED INCREASE Multimodal Account - State (2003)	38	369	13,631	0	0	0	0	0	14,000
999	P01104A	STANWOOD SIDING UPGRADES Multimodal Account - State (2003)	18	0	250	2,750	0	0	0	0	3,000
999	P01105A	Swir Customs Facility/Blaine & White Rock Siding Local/Other	42	0	3,000	6,000	0	0	0	0	9,000
999	P01200A	KING STREET STATION INTERIM IMPROVEMENTS Local/Other	37	4,513	14,558	0	0	0	0	0	19,071
999	P01201A	KING STREET STATION TRACK IMPROVEMENTS Multimodal Account - State (2005)	11	0	3,000	6,800	6,000	0	0	0	15,800
999	P01202A	KING STREET TRANSPORTATION CENTER Multimodal Account - Federal	37	589	2,000	0	6,000	0	0	0	8,589
999	P02001A	Cascades Trailsets Overhaul	02,18,20,25,2	0	0	4,088	6,008	0	0	0	10,096

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