

Third Cross-Exhibit to Gary Norris' Prefiled Direct Testimony



**Washington State
Department of Transportation**

Lynn Peterson
Secretary of Transportation

South Central Region
2809 Rudkin Road
Union Gap, WA 98903-1648
509-577-1600 / FAX: 509-577-1603
TTY: 1-800-833-6388
www.wsdot.wa.gov

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Yakima County Public Services
128 North Second Street
Yakima, WA 98901

Attention: Kent McHenry, Traffic Engineering Manager

Subject: Proposed BNSF Closures of N. Stevens Road and Barnhart Road
SR 22, MP 6.80 & MP 12.77, respectively

We understand that BNSF is in contact with Yakima County and is proposing to close the County railroad crossings at N. Stevens Road and at Barnhart Road in the lower Yakima Valley. These railroad crossings are in close proximity to the County road intersections with State Highway 22.

The Washington State Department of Transportation is concerned about these proposed closures affecting the safety and operation of SR 22. The primary land use in the Lower Valley is agriculture and there are a significant number of fields in the vicinity of the BNSF rail lines where farm equipment accesses these fields via local roads. Farm vehicles are larger, slower, and less maneuverable than general traffic. If the N. Stevens Road and Barnhart Road crossings are closed, there are no alternate routes on the local system to accommodate the farm vehicle travel. In the absence of alternate routes, WSDOT expects an increase in the number and trip duration of farm vehicles on SR 22.

SR 22 has a speed limit of 60 miles per hour. Introducing slower farm vehicles with the high speed highway traffic of SR 22 will create operational concerns and would likely increase the risk of collisions.

If you have any questions regarding our comments please contact Rick Holmstrom at 577-1633.

Sincerely,



Troy A. Suing, P.E.

Assistant Region Administrator for Planning and Program Management

TS: rh/jjg
cc: File
Les Turnley, Area 2 Maintenance Superintendent