

1/30/09

Dear Sirs

I am against the BNSF plan to close the Logen Road crossing. Following are some of my concerns.

BNSF gives "substantially improving safety" as the only reason for closing the crossing. No other benefit of the closure is even hinted at in the filing! The mere fact that this is not a busy crossing at least partially negates that argument. There isn't a lot of traffic to get into trouble! There has never been an accident at the crossing, and in recent years there has been an automatic crossing guard which further reduces the chance of an accident.

I fail to see how a train parked at the Logen Road crossing, with lowered arms and lights, presents a public safety issue. How often have collisions with a parked train been reported? In fact, I would go so far to say that the public safety argument is completely bogus! There may be public *inconvenience* if trains block the crossing, but not public *danger*.

Moving one of the crossing guards to facilitate double tracks would not be very expensive, perhaps even less expensive than *removing* the existing crossing arms! Also, a cul-de-sac would not have to be constructed if one of the guards was moved and the crossing left open.

The BNSF spokesman said there is a federal law that prohibits a train from blocking a crossing for more than 20 minutes. As Kathy Hunter from the UTC clarified in communication with my brother Lynn, the 20 minute rule comes from the UTC, not the federal government, and is one to which exceptions can be granted. Blockage of traffic would be a factor only for westbound traffic, because eastbound traffic would see the parked train, and not even turn onto Logen Road.

Presuming the crossing is closed, the existence, and presumed persistence, of a private farm crossing south of Logen Road, and north of the city of Stanwood should be enough precedence to allow me to continue using Logen Road as a private crossing for my farm equipment. Forcing me to drive a slow tractor on Old Pacific Highway and Pioneer Highway would create more of a public danger than leaving the crossing open. Perhaps the most dangerous part of the tractor trip would be on 300th, where there is very short visibility on a steep hill.

The filing states that pedestrian traffic is "extremely infrequent" in the area. Would you call daily use by my cousin and her husband "extremely infrequent?" Would you call daily use by neighbor Bob H. and others as "extremely infrequent?" Logen Road is also used by area joggers/runners on a regular basis, especially when the weather is amicable.

I have mentioned before that Logen Road acts as important bypass for traffic if there is an emergency on Old Pacific Highway between Logen Road and Stanwood. Recent examples have been traffic accidents blocking the highway. Also any blockage of traffic

in Stanwood results in Logen Road acting as a bypass. The most recent example was the flooding in recent weeks, which resulted in intermittent closure of Hwy 532.

On a slightly different tangent, is BNSF required to provide any mitigation for the wetlands they will be destroying with the siding extension? And tell me again why the siding extension could not be built north of the Old Pacific Highway crossing where there are no public crossings for some 5 miles?

The filing says the City of Stanwood is in favor of closing the Logen Road crossing. That is true only in a roundabout way. It would be more accurate to say that the City of Stanwood is in favor of passenger trains stopping in Stanwood. The City is only in favor of the crossing closure because BNRR says that closure of the crossing is somehow a prerequisite to Stanwood receiving passenger service. For the various reasons listed above, I see no reason why closure of the crossing should be tied to passenger trains stopping in Stanwood.

I have talked with Dale Fulfs, fire chief for north Snohomish County. He is concerned about any crossing closure that reduces access to houses and property, and is in favor of leaving the crossing open. He indicated that he was planning to write a letter to the UTC regarding his views.

I have also spoken with Lt Steve Dittoe of the Snohomish County Sheriff's office, who is in charge of north county. He was somewhat surprised that he had not been notified about this planned closure. I forwarded the petition to him, and hopefully he will respond with comments to the UTC.

Sincerely

Dan Logen

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_