

January 23, 2003

Ms. Marilyn Showalter

Mr. Richard Hemstad

Mr. Pat Oshie

Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission

**1300 S. Evergreen Park Drive SW –**

**Olympia, WA 98504-7250**

Dear Madam and Gentlemen:

The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission protects consumers by ensuring that utility and transportation services are fairly priced, available, reliable, and safe. Your Railroad Safety Division enforces state and federal safety regulations involving common carrier railroads in the State of Washington. Railroad accident prevention is the goal of your railroad safety inspection program.

How can you endorse a technology of which the industry itself is unwilling to release accident statistics. I am talking about Union Pacific's Remote Control technology. We know and have pictures of many accidents involving this technology. We know that the carrier confiscates cameras, hides accidents from public view and takes great measures to ensure that these accidents go unreported. Now that in and of itself is enough to scare us.

But throw this into the mix. Union Pacific is in the process of firing a union representative in Houston who endeavored to bring safety issues involving this technology to the public forefront. We know that this technology originates in Canada, where it is sparsely used, if at all. We know that four U.S. cities have already banned the use of remote control within their city limits. And we know the facts, which is something that has never been put forth to the public. We don't believe that the public wants hazardous waste and essential freight being moved through our cities and neighborhoods on remotely controlled trains, especially at a time when we are threatened daily with terrorist attack. Why not just hand the train over to them. And at a time when our economy is waning, we don't want more men and women out of work, especially if they are supplanted by an untested and dangerous technology.

What we want is safety. We empower you to watchdog corporate America, to protect the citizens of your State. If Union Pacific can't present safety statistics, how can responsibly allow it in the public domain?

Thank you for your continued support,

**RRESQ**