



Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO

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January 28, 2004

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CHAIR, WUTC

Marilyn Showalter, Chair
Washington Utilities & Transportation Commission
PO Box 47250
Olympia, WA 98504-7250

Dear Ms. Showalter:

Subject: Docket TR-021465

The Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO, supports the regulations proposed by WUTC staff in the recent remote control CR-101 process. WUTC staff is concluding a yearlong process of discernment that has looked at the important issues of federal preemption, public safety, and balancing the interests of railroads with the rights of Washington citizens. WUTC staff has completed a very difficult process that resulted in a proposal to the commission that is fair to the interested parties, is legally defensible, and truly addresses the safety of citizens in Washington State.

While arguments linger that additional regulation may be necessary, commission staff has worked under an assumption that minimal regulation is preferable, followed by a continuing follow-up process that would address any need for further regulation. We support this assumption and encourage the commission to support staff recommendations that provide "point projections" at railroad crossings and "point protection" at locations where remote control operation could endanger mainline train operations. One current research project of 254 remote control accidents, incidents and injuries identified the lack of point protection as the primary cause of 53.25% of the time. In the current proposals, WUTC staff has proposed regulations that address over half of all accidents, incidents, and injuries resulting from remote control operation. This is valuable, supportable work by WUTC staff.

The Washington State Labor Council encourages the WUTC staff to stand up for the safety of Washington citizens and vote for a CR-102 process that includes point protection.

Sincerely,

Rick S. Bender
President

RSB:jh
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