

January 22, 2003

Heather Rau
7414 NE 154th Ave
Vancouver WA 98682

Marilyn Showalter, Chairwoman
Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission
1300 S. Evergreen Park Drive SW
Olympia, WA 98504-7250

RE: Docket #TR-021465

Dear Ms. Showalter,

I am the wife of a locomotive engineer working in Washington State. I am very concerned about the use of "Remote Controlled Locomotives" in railroad operations. I have learned that the Federal Railroad Administration has failed to effectively regulate the use of remote control technology to safeguard the citizens of Washington. I am concerned that without regulation, railroads are not considering my family's safety in their rush to experiment with questionable technology. I have learned that railroad remote control operations will occur in major cities like Seattle, Tacoma, Everett, Spokane, Pasco, Vancouver as well as smaller communities like Shelton and Aberdeen. I also know that fewer people will be safeguarding railroad operations on our public crossings, in business centers, and through our private neighborhoods. Most people in our communities are unaware of the dangerous cargo we carry through their backyards, and to find out our railroad wants to operate these trains in yards in our cities is appalling and very dangerous.

Numerous accidents are being documented because of this train operation in Washington and across the United States. These accidents have caused worker injuries, release of hazardous materials, and risks to public safety. I believe that action is necessary immediately to stem the risk that railroads are bringing to Washington communities. It has come to my attention that the city of Chicago and another in Louisiana have outlawed the use of these dangerous operations and I hope the city of Vancouver and the state of Washington is next.

Please support the efforts of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers to bring safe and sane regulation of railroad remote control technology to Washington State. The safety of my family, my neighbors, and myself depends on your efforts.

Respectfully,


Heather Rau

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