


The Burlington Northern Sante Fe Railroad is proposing closure of the Hickox Road crossing a mile and a half south of Mount Vernon, Washington. The impact of this closure has a huge impact on the practical and safe operation of our 600 cow dairy farm operation. The impact of the closure would affect us in the following way,

1. The Skagit River, one of the largest rivers in western Washington, is located about a half mile to the west of our dairy. Because of its size and location, it is always a threat for flooding when there is heavy rainfall. The river also splits into a north and south fork at the west end of Hickox Road. With a closure of the crossing a quarter of a mile to the east and an emergency at the river dike, our business is absolutely trapped and there is no way for us to get our 600 head of cattle and equipment hauled away to safety or for anyone on Hickox Road to make a safe getaway. This proposed closure is creating a danger for the residents of Hickox Road.
2. Fire and emergency assistance are also greatly affected. It will take at least another 7 minutes for emergency vehicles to access our location for fire, accident, or health emergency. If flooding is occurring, we have no way to get emergency vehicles to our location.
3. Our milk is picked up every day. The milking parlor is located close enough to the road that it is very difficult for the milktruck to make the turn in the front of the barn to be able to receive the milk. I hope you have looked at the area so you understand what I am discussing.

In conclusion, endangering the residents of West Hickox Road by impairing fire, accident, and health access, and no way out is wrong for government to allow this closure to happen. We are more than 'just a bunch of farm ground and farmers' as was stated in Burlington Northern Sante Fe comments. We contribute over \$2 million a year to the local infrastructure and economy. I will repeat a comment I made to the WUTC representatives at the train station meeting held several months ago, "move the siding to the area between Conway town and Stackpole road and it will have effect on 2 homes, with no impairment to them for fire and safety access because of their proximity to the Conway Fire Dept.

I hope the WUTC will exercise good judgment in this decision and leave the road open.

Sincerely,  
Dave Boon

  
Mount Vernon WA 98273

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