

February 20, 2003

Robert Holton
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Coeur d alene Id. 83814

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 an engineer working in Washington State, and I am very concerned about the use of "Remote Controlled Locomotives" in railroad operations. I know first hand the hazards this technology introduces into Washington communities. I also know that the Federal Railroad Administration has failed to effectively regulate the use of remote control technology to safeguard the citizens of Washington.

On August 6, 2002, the Puget Sound and Pacific (PSAP) railroad while operating a train using remote control caused a crossing accident in Shelton, Washington. The train ran away from the operator, careened several miles downhill without anyone on board, and collided with a tractor-trailer on a crossing in downtown Shelton. The PSAP is not alone using remote control technology. The BNSF, and soon the UPRR, will use remote control in Washington.

Numerous accidents have occurred in Washington State (most recently a near miss with a passenger train in Seattle) and across the United States by railroads using remote control technology. The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers has documented numerous accidents with remote control technology. 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.

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 regulatory efforts.

Respectfully,
Robert Holton