



WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF WHEAT GROWERS

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September 12, 2009

Honorable Ray LaHood
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Mr. Secretary:

On behalf of wheat and barley producers across eastern Washington, the Washington Association of Wheat Growers would like to voice strong support for the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant funding request of the PCC Rail Authority. The funds will rehabilitate and upgrade rail branch lines in eastern Washington known as the Palouse-Coulee City Railroad (PCC).

Transportation is critical to our state's producers with the shortline railroad infrastructure serving an important grain gathering function for the industry. The shortline rails bring essential crop inputs to inland distribution centers and serve as a conduit to reach markets for our grain.

The shortline rails offer tremendous benefits of the shortline rails to our rural communities as well in regards to safety, reduced road maintenance costs and lower emissions from fewer trucks on the roads. Economic development potential exists as reliable rail service is an incentive for businesses to develop and to expand with facility upgrades.

Due to years of deferred maintenance, the poor condition of the tracks forces trains to run at rates of speed that make it difficult for the operators to be viable. TIGER funds would be crucial to the branch rail lines and could serve to directly improve the marketing of grain, revitalize communities, and reduce costs associated with increased truck traffic on rural roads.

Thank you for showing your commitment to infrastructure that is so vital to rural America!

Sincerely,

Brit Ausman
President