

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – June 29, 2022

Media Contact:

David Billetdeaux, Port Attorney

dbilletdeaux@portofbenton.com, 509-375-3060

Port Terminates Lease With Rail Network Operator

Richland, Wash. – The Port of Benton terminated its lease with the Tri-City Railroad Company, LLC ("TCRY") as operator of the port's Southern Connection rail network. The 16-mile rail line runs between Center Parkway in Kennewick and Horn Rapids Road in north Richland.

The lease termination follows a ruling from Benton County Superior Court in May that found Tri-City Railroad was in default of its lease with the Port because the company had not properly maintained the rail system.

A final settlement agreement which established how the transition would occur became effective June 17, 2022. As a result of this agreement, the Port will assess existing tenancies at 2579 Stevens Drive and begin to negotiate new leases ahead of becoming the primary lessor on August 1, 2022.

For rail-related emergencies, problems or needs at the 2579 Stevens Drive building in Richland, contact Port of Benton at 509-375-3060. *This is a 24-hour monitored phone system.*

The port is currently establishing a contract with RailWorks to coordinate rail inspections and maintenance on the line until a new line operator is secured. Additionally, Advance Signal & Contracting will be taking over signal maintenance and inspection.

**Please note that although the Port of Benton owns the rail and trackage commonly known as the Southern Connection, for all legal intents and purposes the Port of Benton is not considered a railroad, and as such, will not be taking over any operations of the Port trackage. We appreciate your patience and open communication throughout this process.*

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Port of Benton's district encompasses two-thirds of Benton County, including north Richland, Benton City and Prosser. The port collaborates with its local, state and federal partners to drive economic development in diverse industries ranging from agribusiness, transportation and high-tech research and development to manufacturing.