



BENTON-FRANKLIN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Regional Planning Agency for Benton & Franklin Counties

Benton-Franklin Metropolitan Planning Organization • Regional Transportation Planning Organization
Benton-Franklin Economic Development District

November 4, 2022

Ms. Diahann Howard, Executive Director
Port of Benton
3250 Port of Benton Blvd
Richland, WA 99354
dhoward@portofbenton.com

RE: Support for Port of Benton's request to Consolidated Rail Infrastructure & Safety Improvement (CRISI) Program

Ms. Howard,

The Benton-Franklin Council of Governments is pleased to support the Port of Benton's Southern Rail Connection project to CRISI. This project will **replace end-of-life railroad crossings over several of the busiest roadways in the region**, propelling the ongoing success and growth of the Horn Rapids Industrial Park. The Port of Benton's rail line is the critical link between a successful and growing cluster of freight-dependent businesses in the industrial park and the regional rail network operated by Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad and the Union Pacific Railroad. This project is a crucial segment of a larger strategy vital for the Port of Benton to sustain and upgrade the functionality of its rail system. This upgrade enables industrial operations expansion and further growth in the energy & manufacturing sectors while improving the supply chain and creating additional high-wage career opportunities supporting these industries.

The **at-grade crossing replacement**, ties, and rail infrastructure in this project will drastically improve vehicular safety, reducing freight rail chokepoints, simultaneously supporting the ongoing growth of freight, and resulting in a roadway carbon emissions reduction. The Southern Connection project is the second largest short line, offsetting 1.3M tons of carbon emissions annually. Each unit train removes 310 trucks from our roadways, supporting our region and state's climate goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and shift to a more sustainable multi-modal transportation system.

The project improves rail access for a significant portion of the Horn Rapids Industrial Park, providing a valuable freight movement option for current and future businesses in the value-add agriculture, advanced manufacturing, sustainable logistics, and clean energy technologies sectors. This industrial park is a crucial resource for the Port of Benton and the City of Richland's economic strategies. This project is ranked 8 out of 56 statewide projects in the Freight Mobility State Investment Board (FMSIB) annual Freight Mobility Priorities list for 2023-2024, based on the economic and safety impacts this project will have on multiple modes of transportation. The Benton-Franklin Council of Governments supports the Port of Benton's planned rail improvements to upgrading signal crossings and replacing ties and rail. This rail system provides critical infrastructure to the Tri-Cities' regional multi-modal transportation system.

Sincerely,

Michelle M. Holt

Michelle Holt
Executive Director

November 8, 2022

Ms. Diahann Howard, PPM® Executive Director
Port of Benton
3250 Port of Benton Blvd
Richland, WA 99354
dhoward@portofbenton.com

Subject: Support for Port of Benton's request to Consolidated Rail Infrastructure & Safety Improvement (CRISI) Program

Diahann,

The Tri-City Development Council (TRIDEC) is pleased to support the Port of Benton's Southern Rail Connection project to CRISI. This important project will ***replace end-of-life railroad crossings over busy roadways***, enabling the ongoing success and growth of the Horn Rapids Industrial Park. The Port's rail line is the critical link between a successful and growing cluster of freight-dependent businesses in the industrial park and the regional rail network operated by both Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad and the Union Pacific Railroad. This project is a transformational segment of a larger strategy vital for the Port to sustain and upgrade the functionality of its rail system improving and supporting industrial operations, expansion and business growth in the energy sector, manufacturing and improves supply chain delivery and provides careers in these industries.

The **at-grade crossing replacement**, ties and rail sought with this project will improve vehicular safety immediately reducing freight rail chokepoints and supporting the ongoing growth of freight to reduce carbon emissions from the roadways. The Southern Connection project already is the second largest short line off setting 1.3M tons annually; each unit train removes 310 trucks from our roadways supporting our region and state's climate goals to reduce emissions.

As the Port of Benton's railroad track runs through a significant portion of the Horn Rapids Industrial Park and serves as a vital rail line for both the Port of Benton and City of Richland's economic development strategy improving and providing value-add agriculture, advanced manufacturing, sustainable logistics and clean energy technologies. TRIDEC is fully supportive of all of the Port's planned rail improvements including upgrading signal crossings, replacing ties and rail.

Sincerely,



Karl Dye
President & CEO



Transportation Building
310 Maple Park Avenue S.E.
P.O. Box 47300
Olympia, WA 98504-7300
360-705-7000
TTY: 1-800-833-6388
www.wsdot.wa.gov

October 2, 2022

Ms. Diahann Howard, PPM® Executive Director
Port of Benton
3250 Port of Benton Blvd
Richland, WA 99354
dhoward@portofbenton.com

Subject: Support for Port of Benton's request to Consolidated Rail Infrastructure & Safety Improvement (CRISI) Program

Diahann,

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is pleased to support the Port of Benton's Southern Rail Connection project to CRISI. This important project will ***replace end-of-life railroad crossings over busy roadways***, enabling the ongoing success and growth of the Horn Rapids Industrial Park. The Port's rail line is the critical link between a successful and growing cluster of freight-dependent businesses in the industrial park and the regional rail network operated by both Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad and the Union Pacific Railroad. This project is a transformational segment of a larger strategy vital for the Port to sustain and upgrade the functionality of its rail system improving and supporting industrial operations, expansion and business growth in the energy sector, manufacturing and improves supply chain delivery and provides careers in these industries.

The **at-grade crossing replacement**, ties and rail sought with this project will improve vehicular safety immediately reducing freight rail chokepoints and supporting the ongoing growth of freight to reduce carbon emissions from the roadways. The Southern Connection project already is the second largest short line off setting 1.3M tons annually; each unit train removes 310 trucks from our roadways supporting our region and state's climate goals to reduce emissions.

As the Port of Benton's railroad track runs through a significant portion of the Horn Rapids Industrial Park and serves as a vital rail line for both the Port of Benton and City of Richland's economic development strategy improving and providing value-add agriculture, advanced manufacturing, sustainable logistics and clean energy technologies. WSDOT is fully supportive of all of the Port's planned rail improvements including upgrading signal crossings, replacing ties and rail.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Millar', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Roger Millar, PE, FASCE, FAICP
Secretary of Transportation

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4704

COMMITTEES:
APPROPRIATIONS
BUDGET
HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR,
AND PENSIONS
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

November 30, 2022

Amit Bose
Administrator
Department of Transportation
Federal Railroad Administration
55 M St. SE
Washington, DC 20003

Dear Administrator Bose:

I write in support of an application submitted by the Port of Benton for the Federal Railroad Administration's *Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Program* for the Port of Benton Southern Connection Project.

The Port of Benton is seeking a CRISI grant to replace end-of-life railroad crossings over busy roadways. Specifically, this funding would be used to purchase new ties and rail and to replace at-grade crossings. Through these improvements, this project would reduce freight rail chokepoints and enhance vehicular safety. Additionally, replacing the aging infrastructure would allow for the ongoing success and growth of the Horn Rapids Industrial Park in Richland, Washington. This industrial park is a distribution hub for the region and contributes to the continued economic growth of the area.

The project would have positive climate impact by offsetting approximately 1.3 million tons of emissions annually as each unit train removes 310 trucks from the country's roadways. Additionally, the Horn Rapids Industrial park supports over 700 jobs, which has the potential to double from regional growth and the availability of industrially ready sites near the rail. These impacts, along with the improvements the rail replacements would have on vehicular safety, demonstrate how this project supports the CRISI program's goals of improving the safety, efficiency, and reliability of intercity passenger and freight rail.

Thank you for your consideration of the Port of Benton's application. Please contact Bree Rabourn in my Seattle office at 206-553-0724 with any questions.

Sincerely,



Patty Murray
United States Senator

Jerome Delvin, District 1

Shon Small, District 2

Will McKay, District 3



Jerrold MacPherson
County Administrator

Matt Rasmussen
Deputy County Administrator

Board of County Commissioners

15 November 2022

Diahann Howard, Executive Director
Port of Benton
3250 Port of Benton Blvd
Richland WA 99354

Re: Support for Consolidated Rail Infrastructure & Safety Improvement Program Request

Ms. Howard,

Benton County is pleased to support the Port of Benton's Southern Rail Connection project to the *Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement Program* ("CRISI"). This important project will **replace end-of-life railroad crossings over busy roadways**, enabling the ongoing success and growth of the Horn Rapids Industrial Park. The Port's rail line is the critical link between a successful and growing cluster of freight-dependent businesses in the industrial park and the regional rail network operated by both Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad and the Union Pacific Railroad. This project is a transformational segment of a larger strategy vital for the Port to sustain and upgrade the functionality of its rail system improving and supporting industrial operations, expansion and business growth in the energy sector, manufacturing and improves supply chain delivery and provides careers in these industries.

The **at-grade crossing replacement**, ties, and rail sought with this project will improve vehicular safety immediately reducing freight rail chokepoints and supporting the ongoing growth of freight to reduce carbon emissions from the roadways. The Southern Connection project already is the second largest short line off setting 1.3M tons annually; each unit train removes 310 trucks from our roadways supporting our region and state's climate goals to reduce emissions.

As the Port of Benton's railroad track runs through a significant portion of the Horn Rapids Industrial Park and serves as a vital rail line for both the Port of Benton and City of Richland's economic development strategy improving and providing value-added agriculture, advanced manufacturing, sustainable logistics, and clean energy technologies. The County is fully supportive of the Port's planned rail improvements including upgrading signal crossings, tie replacement, and rail. Thank you for taking our comments.

Sincerely,

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Shon Small
Chairman

MARIA CANTWELL
WASHINGTON



United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4705

November 16, 2022

Amit Bose
Administrator
Federal Railroad Administration
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Bose,

I am writing in support of the Port of Benton's application to the FY22 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement (CRISI) Program for the Southern Rail Connection Project. The Port of Benton is applying for \$8 million in CRISI funds to replace and repair aging at-grade crossings along the Port of Benton's railroad.

Originally built in the 1950s, the Port's 16-mile rail line is the critical link between a successful and growing cluster of freight-dependent businesses in the industrial park and the regional rail network operated by both Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad and the Union Pacific Railroad. The Port's rail line sees the second highest annual freight tonnage of any short line in Washington state at 1.3 million tons annually, and improvements are urgently needed to prevent the line from being taken out of service.

Existing at-grade crossings along the rail line are in need of urgent repair and replacement. Several crossings through the City of Richland are nearly at total failure. Planned improvements to crossings include replacing at-grade crossing panels, repairing ties and rail through three crossings, correcting and repairing track bonding, repairing asphalt approaches, and replacing internal signal components. These repairs will improve vehicular safety and reduce freight rail chokepoints, reducing carbon emissions.

This project is a segment of a larger strategy vital for the Port to sustain and upgrade the functionality of its rail system, improving and supporting industrial operations. The replacement and repair of these at-grade crossings is vital for the continued growth of the Horns Rapid Industrial Park and the City of Richmond's economic development.

For these reasons, I request your full and fair consideration of the Port of Benton's application.

Sincerely,

Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



November 1, 2022

Ms. Diahann Howard, PPM® Executive Director
Port of Benton
3250 Port of Benton Blvd
Richland, WA 99354
dhoward@portofbenton.com

RE: Support for Port of Benton's request to Consolidated Rail Infrastructure & Safety Improvement (CRISI) Program

Diahann:

The City of Richland is pleased to support the Port of Benton's Southern Rail Connection project to CRISI. This critical project will replace end-of-life railroad crossings over busy roadways, enabling the ongoing success and growth of the Horn Rapids Industrial Park. The Port's rail line is the critical link between a successful and growing cluster of freight-dependent businesses in the industrial park and the regional rail network operated by Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad and the Union Pacific Railroad. This project is a transformational part of a larger vital strategy by the Port to sustain and upgrade the functionality of its rail system that the City wholeheartedly supports and needs, providing industrial sector jobs at all levels for our region.

The at-grade crossing replacement, ties, and rail sought with this project will improve vehicular safety immediately reducing freight rail chokepoints and supporting the ongoing growth of freight to reduce carbon emissions from the roadways. The Southern Connection project is already the second largest short line offsetting 1.3M tons annually; each unit train removes 225 trucks from our roadways, supporting our region and state's climate goals.

The Port of Benton's railroad track runs through a significant portion of the City of Richland and is vital to our economic development strategy for the Horn Rapids Industrial Park. The City fully supports the Port's planned rail improvements, including upgrading signal crossings and replacing ties and rail.

Sincerely,

Jon Amundson, ICMA-CM
City Manger

November 1, 2022

Ms. Diahann Howard, PPM® Executive Director
Port of Benton
3250 Port of Benton Blvd
Richland, WA 99354
dhoward@portofbenton.com

Subject: Support for Port of Benton's request to Consolidated Rail Infrastructure & Safety Improvement (CRISI) Program

Diahann,

Central Washington Corn Processors, Inc. is pleased to support the Port of Benton's Southern Rail Connection project to CRISI. This important project will **replace end-of-life railroad crossings over busy roadways**, enabling the ongoing success and growth of the Horn Rapids Industrial Park. The Port's rail line is the critical link between a successful and growing cluster of freight-dependent businesses in the industrial park and the regional rail network operated by both Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad and the Union Pacific Railroad. This project is a transformational segment of a larger strategy vital for the Port to sustain and upgrade the functionality of its rail system improving and supporting industrial operations, expansion and business growth in the energy sector, manufacturing and improves supply chain delivery and provides careers in these industries.

The **at-grade crossing replacement**, ties and rail sought with this project will improve vehicular safety immediately reducing freight rail chokepoints and supporting the ongoing growth of freight to reduce carbon emissions from the roadways. The Southern Connection project already is the second largest short line off setting 1.3M tons annually; each unit train removes 310 trucks from our roadways supporting our region and state's climate goals to reduce emissions.

As the Port of Benton's railroad track runs through a significant portion of the Horn Rapids Industrial Park and serves as a vital rail line for both the Port of Benton and City of Richland's economic development strategy improving and providing value-add agriculture, advanced manufacturing, sustainable logistics and clean energy technologies. Central Washington Corn Processors, Inc. is fully supportive of all of the Port's planned rail improvements including upgrading signal crossings, replacing ties and rail.

Without the continued efforts to keep the Port of Benton tracks up to code and open for transit our company cannot remain in business!

Sincerely,
Dennis Kylo Pres. CWCP

November 14, 2022

Ms. Diahann Howard, PPM® Executive Director
Port of Benton
3250 Port of Benton Blvd
Richland, WA 99354
dhoward@portofbenton.com

Subject: Support for Port of Benton's request to Consolidated Rail Infrastructure & Safety Improvement (CRISI) Program

Diahann,

Lamb Weston is pleased to support the Port of Benton's Southern Rail Connection project to CRISI. This important project will **replace end-of-life railroad crossings over busy roadways**, enabling the ongoing success and growth of the Horn Rapids Industrial Park. The Port's rail line is the critical link between a successful and growing cluster of freight-dependent businesses in the industrial park and the regional rail network operated by both Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad and the Union Pacific Railroad. This project is a transformational segment of a larger strategy vital for the Port to sustain and upgrade the functionality of its rail system improving and supporting industrial operations, expansion and business growth in the energy sector, manufacturing and improves supply chain delivery and provides careers in these industries.

The **at-grade crossing replacement**, ties and rail sought with this project will improve vehicular safety immediately reducing freight rail chokepoints and supporting the ongoing growth of freight to reduce carbon emissions from the roadways. The Southern Connection project already is the second largest short line off setting 1.3M tons annually; each unit train removes 310 trucks from our roadways supporting our region and state's climate goals to reduce emissions.

As the Port of Benton's railroad track runs through a significant portion of the Horn Rapids Industrial Park and serves as a vital rail line for both the Port of Benton and City of Richland's economic development strategy improving and providing value-add agriculture, advanced manufacturing, sustainable logistics and clean energy technologies. Lamb Weston is fully supportive of all of the Port's planned rail improvements including upgrading signal crossings, replacing ties and rail.

Sincerely,



Mark Schuster
Lamb Weston - VP Global Operations



BUILDING AMERICA®

November 30th, 2022

Ms. Diahann Howard, PPM Executive Director
Port of Benton
3250 Port of Benton Blvd
Richland, WA 99354
dhoward@portofbenton.com

Subject: Support for Port of Benton's request to Consolidated Rail Infrastructure & Safety Improvement (CRISI) Program

Diahann,

I am writing on behalf of Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) to confirm my support for the Port of Benton's (The Port's) Southern Rail Connection project. This important project will ***replace end-of-life railroad crossings over busy roadways***, enabling the ongoing success and growth of the Horn Rapids Industrial Park. The Port's rail line is the critical link between a successful and growing cluster of freight-dependent businesses in the industrial park and the regional rail network operated by both Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad and the Union Pacific Railroad. This project is a transformational segment of a larger strategy vital for the Port to sustain and upgrade the functionality of its rail systems. This project will improve and support industrial operations, expansion and business growth in the energy sector, manufacturing and improve supply chain delivery and provide careers in these industries.

The **at-grade crossing replacement**, ties and rail sought with this project will improve vehicular safety immediately reducing freight rail chokepoints and supporting the ongoing growth of freight to reduce carbon emissions from the roadways. The Southern Connection project already carries the second largest tonnage for any short-line in the State of Washington, and each unit train removes 310 trucks from our roadways and supports our region and state's climate goals to reduce emissions.

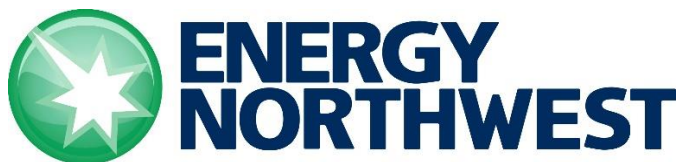
As the Port of Benton's railroad track runs through a significant portion of the Horn Rapids Industrial Park and serves as a vital rail line for both the Port of Benton and City of Richland's economic development strategy; the project will improve and provide value-add agriculture, advanced manufacturing, sustainable logistics and clean energy technologies.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeff Sheldon', written in a cursive style.

Jeff Sheldon
General Director Network Development

cc: Mark Bristol, Union Pacific
Peggy Harris, Union Pacific
Adrian Guerrero, Union Pacific



Bob Schuetz
P.O. Box 968, 1023
Richland, WA 99352-0968
Ph. 509-377-2425
reschuetz@energy-northwest.com

November 28, 2022

Ms. Diahann Howard
PPM® Executive Director
Port of Benton
3250 Port of Benton Blvd
Richland, WA 99354

Subject: Support for Port of Benton's request to Consolidated Rail Infrastructure & Safety Improvement (CRISI) Program

Dear Diahann,

Energy Northwest is pleased to support the Port of Benton's request for funds from the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure & Safety Improvement (CRISI) Program to support its Southern Rail Connection project. This important project will replace end-of-life railroad crossings over busy roadways, enabling the ongoing success and growth of the Horn Rapids Industrial Park and other potential projects to the north of Richland.

The Port's rail line is the critical link between a successful and growing cluster of freight-dependent businesses in the industrial park and the regional rail network operated by both Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad and the Union Pacific Railroad. This project is a transformational segment of a larger strategy vital for the Port to sustain and upgrade the functionality of its rail system, improving and supporting existing and future industrial operations, expansion and business growth in the energy and manufacturing sectors. These improvements will not only improve supply chain delivery, but also support careers in these industries.

This project also supports regional and state efforts to reduce transportation-related carbon emissions by expanding the capacity of this short line connection. The Southern Rail Connection project will improve vehicle safety and reduce freight rail chokepoints by replacing existing at-grade crossings, rails and ties. These improvements will ensure that this short line, which already offsets 1.3 million tons of carbon annually, will replace even more truck traffic from area roadways, as each unit train replaces 310 trucks.

Energy Northwest has strong ties to the Horn Rapids Industrial Park with the recent installation of the Horn Rapids Solar Storage and Training Project. At Columbia Generating Station, the Port of Benton's short line rail was recently used to transport new low-pressure rotors for the main turbine, providing economic and safe passage of over \$60 million in critical upgrades. Regarding future use of this short line, Energy Northwest is seriously considering how it can support the development of new clean sources of electricity to assist the state with meeting the goals of the Clean Energy Transformation Act. Consequently, the improvements slated as part of the Southern Rail Connection project are vital to supporting Energy Northwest's long-term strategy.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

BEB324CBBCAE40F...
Bob Schuetz
CEO

BS/SV



November 21, 2022

Secretary Peter Buttigieg Secretary of
Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation 1200 New Jersey
Avenue SE Washington, DC 20590

RE: Port of Benton's commitment to matching funds for the Port of Benton's White Bluffs Southern Connection Rail Project under the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement Program (CRISI) Fiscal Year 2022 Grant Program.

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

On behalf of the Port of Benton, I certify the Port's commitment to provide \$2,400,000, to match the requested \$8,000,000 in CRISI FY22 Grant. The Port of Benton's 2023 budget, approved by our Port Commission, reflects a Port commitment of \$250,000 and recognizes the multi-year commitment of an additional anticipated match requirement of \$2,150,000.

Thank you for your consideration of this application.

I can be reached at (509) 375-3060 for further questions.

Respectfully,

DocuSigned by:

49E0B80534B8451...
Danielle Connor
Director of Finance
Dconnor@portofbenton.com
509-375-3060

Diahann Howard, PPM®, Executive Director



French Thompson
General Director
Public Infrastructure & Investments

BNSF Railway Company
P. O. Box 961502
Fort Worth, TX 76161-0052

2600 Lou Menk Drive
Fort Worth, Texas 76131-2830
(817) 352-6316

French.Thompson@BNSF.com

December 1, 2022

Amit Bose, Administrator
Federal Railroad Administration
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Subject: BNSF Letter of Support – Southern Rail Connection

Dear Administrator Bose,

BNSF Railway supports efforts by the Port of Benton to secure federal discretionary funding under the 2022 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement (CRISI) grant for the Southern Rail Connection Project. If awarded, the grant will fund replacement of railroad crossings over busy roadways, enabling the ongoing success and growth of the Horn Rapids Industrial Park.

BNSF values our working relationship with the Port of Benton and is prepared to work with all involved public agencies on further development of this project, subject to satisfactory review of final engineering and entering into definitive agreements as may be required by BNSF or other project stakeholders.

BNSF appreciates your thorough review of this application and looks forward to continuing its relationship with the Port of Benton through this important project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "French Thompson", with a stylized flourish at the end.

French Thompson
General Director – Public Infrastructure & Investments