

May 21, 2024

Ms. Diahann Howard, PPM®, PDX Executive Director  
Port of Benton  
3250 Port of Benton Blvd  
Richland, WA 99354  
[dhoward@portofbenton.com](mailto:dhoward@portofbenton.com)

**RE: Support for Port of Benton's Request to Consolidated Rail Infrastructure Safety Improvements (CRISI) Program**

Dear Diahann,

The Tri-City Development Council (TRIDEC) is pleased to support the Port of Benton's White Bluff's Rail Project Modernization and Intermodal Facility project to CRISI. This important project will create jobs and generate economic expansion for our region, particularly in clean energy, advanced manufacturing, and value-added agriculture. 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. Supporting the Port of Benton's application to CRISI equally supports manufacturing and will improve supply chain delivery while providing careers in Eastern Washington.

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 offsetting 1.3M tons annually; each unit train removes 310 trucks from our roadways supporting our region and state's climate goals to reduce emissions.

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, and providing clean energy jobs. TRIDEC fully supports the Port of Benton's White Bluff's Rail Project and Intermodal Facility.

Sincerely,



Karl Dye  
President & CEO



May 21, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg  
U.S. Secretary of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

**RE: CRISI - PORT OF BENTON - WHITE BLUFFS RAIL MODERNIZATION  
AND INTERMODAL FACILITY PROJECT**

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

The Washington State Department of Transportation supports the Port of Benton's CRISI application for its White Bluffs Rail Modernization and Intermodal Facility project.

The project will upgrade approximately three miles of rail, ties, ballast on elevated curves; construct an intermodal site for security purposes; replace crossing panels and related equipment; and upgrade the Port's wye track with new ties, 136 lb. track, switches, and ballast.

This funding would allow the Port of Benton to improve connections to two Class I railroads – BNSF and Union Pacific – which both serve this location. The inland port's ability to bolster these connections helps preserve the rail system's long-term economic status and improve reliability on a system that serves state, national and global shippers.

The overall project's public benefits are consistent with state and federal objectives concerning the more environmentally sustainable movement of freight via rail.

The project is of great importance to freight movement in Washington state and we encourage you to fund this freight rail project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R. Millar'.

Roger Millar, PE, FAICP, Dist. M, ASCE  
Secretary of Transportation



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
P.O. Box 42560 • Olympia, Washington 98501 • (360) 902-1800

May 22, 2024

Ms. Diahann Howard, PPM®, PDX 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 Improvements (CRISI) Program

Diahann,

The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) is pleased to support the Port of Benton's White Bluffs Rail Project Modernization and Intermodal Facility project to CRISI. This important project will create jobs and generate economic expansion for our region, particularly in clean energy, advanced manufacturing, and value-added agriculture. 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. By supporting the Port of Benton's application to CRISI it equally supports manufacturing and will improve supply chain delivery while providing careers in Eastern Washington.

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, it serves as a vital rail line for both the Port of Benton and the City of Richland's economic development strategy, facilitating agricultural development, advanced manufacturing, and the creation of clean energy jobs. The WSDA is fully supportive of all the Port of Benton's White Bluffs rail project and intermodal facility.

Sincerely,

Derek I. Sandison  
Director

May 20, 2024



Ms. Diahann Howard, PPM®, PDX Executive Director  
Port of Benton  
3250 Port of Benton Blvd  
Richland, WA 99354  
[dhoward@portofbenton.com](mailto:dhoward@portofbenton.com)

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

Diahann,

Columbia Rail Group is pleased to support the Port of Benton's White Bluff's Rail Project Modernization and Intermodal Facility project to CRISI. This important project will create jobs and generate economic expansion for our region, particularly in the clean energy, advanced manufacturing, and value added agriculture. As the Port's shortline operator, Columbia Rail group recognizes that this 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. By supporting the Port of Benton's application to CRISI it equally supports manufacturing and will improve supply chain delivery while providing careers in Eastern Washington.

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, and providing clean energy jobs. Columbia Rail Group is fully supportive of all of the Port of Benton's White Bluff's rail project and intermodal facility.

Sincerely,

*Nick Zamantakis*

Nick Zamantakis  
Manager of Operations  
Columbia Rail Group



## STATE OF WASHINGTON

### DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

2001 Sixth Avenue Suite 2600 • Seattle, Washington 98121-2895 • (206) 256-6100 • Fax (206) 256-6158

[www.commerce.wa.gov](http://www.commerce.wa.gov)

May 22, 2024

Ms. Diahann Howard  
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 Improvements (CRISI) Program

Dear Executive Director Howard,

The Washington State Department of Commerce is pleased to support the Port of Benton's White Bluff's Rail Project Modernization and Intermodal Facility project to CRISI. This critical project will create family-wage jobs and generate economic expansion for our region, particularly in the clean energy, advanced manufacturing, and value added agriculture. The Port's rail line is an essential link between a successful and growing cluster of freight-dependent businesses in the state 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 to improve and support industrial operations. A CRISI award to the Port of Benton would both support manufacturing and supply chain efficiency, while also providing much-needed family-wage career opportunities in rural communities.

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, and providing clean energy jobs. The Washington State Department of Commerce is fully supportive of all of the Port of Benton's White Bluff's rail project and intermodal facility.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Stephanie', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Stephanie Bowman  
Maritime Industry Director  
Washington State Department of Commerce

Jerome Delvin, *District 1*  
Michael Alvarez, *District 2*  
Will McKay, *District 3*



Jerrod MacPherson  
*County Administrator*  
Matt Rasmussen  
*Deputy County Administrator*

## Board of County Commissioners

21 May 2024

Diahann Howard, Executive Director  
Port of Benton  
3250 Port of Benton Boulevard  
Richland, Washington 99354

### **Re: Consolidated Rail Infrastructure Safety Improvements Program**

Diahann,

Benton County is pleased to support the Port of Benton's *White Bluff's Rail Project Modernization and Intermodal Facility* project application to the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure Safety Improvements Program (CRISI). This important project will contribute immediately and measurably to public safety, congestion relief, intermodal linkages, and overall efficiencies throughout the public and commercial transportation systems in Richland, Benton County, and Eastern Washington. The project supports the County's goals and our integrated approach to partnership-based community and economic development.

We are particularly interested in and excited about the **at-grade crossing replacement** component of the project. The Port's recent record with similar projects has proven popular, productive, and successful. These projects improve safety, efficiency, and contribute to the durability and longevity of rail and road infrastructure.

Good luck with your CRISI application and the project, and please let us know how the County can further assist the Port with this endeavor.

Sincerely,

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Adam J. Fyall  
Sustainable Development Manager