

A resolution of the City Council of Aberdeen, Washington

WHEREAS - between 29 April and 21 May of 2014, there were four derailments of the Genesee and Wyoming rail line between Centralia and Aberdeen that raise serious questions about the capability of this rail line to handle current export commodities letting alone the 150 car unit trains of explosive Bakken and tar sands crude oil; and,

WHEREAS - the Genesee and Wyoming railroad has admitted that they were unaware of the poor condition of the railway and the real bed of the line through Grays Harbor County; and,

WHEREAS - in July 2013 a line of DOT 111 tank cars filled with Bakken and tar sands crude oil derailed in Lac Mégantic, Québec resulting in the destruction of 40 buildings and the deaths of 47 people; and,

WHEREAS - the emergency response teams of the city of Aberdeen as well as the surrounding cities, are not adequately equipped to handle explosions and fire from railcars carrying crude oil or other flammable petroleum distillates; and,

WHEREAS –various groups and organizations such as the Washington State Council of Firefighters through their legislative lobbyist Geoff Simpson, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 77 SeaTac through their business manager Lou Walter, the International Longshoremen and Warehousemen’s Union Local 4, Vancouver through their president Cager Claubaugh and Railroad Workers United, Spokane through their Steering Committee member Robert Hill have registered strong opposition due to safety concerns, to the transportation and storage of crude oil anywhere in the state of Washington; and,

WHEREAS - catastrophic explosions, spills and death due to derailments of tankers carrying Bakken, tar sands and other crude oil have also occurred in Castleton, North Dakota, New Brunswick, Canada, Aliceville, Alabama, Lynchburg, Virginia and other sites within the year since July 2013 and could occur in any town along the rail line including Aberdeen; and,

WHEREAS – the seafood industry accounts for nearly half of the region’s economic value and that industry would be irreparably devastated by spills of crude oil into the waters of Grays Harbor; and,

WHEREAS –shipments of fruits, grains and other vital commodities are experiencing delays and stoppages due to precedence being given to crude oil trains resulting in goods damage and higher prices; and,

WHEREAS – agencies of the United States government, including the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), have, in July of 2014 proposed an overhaul of safety standards for transporting crude oil and alcohol by rail due to the safety concerns over railroad conditions and the conditions of the DOT 111 tank cars;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF THE

CITY OF ABERDEEN WASHINGTON THAT:

The City Council of Aberdeen Washington asks the commissioners of the port of Grays Harbor to reconsider their proposal to build three marine terminals for the transfer of Bakken, tar sands and other crude oil which will result in this oil being transported on DOT 111 railcars known to be unsafe through our urban centers, farm areas and the city itself thus endangering the health, safety, welfare and economic viability of our citizens, the natural environment that supports the fishing and shellfish industries and our entire County.

The City Council of Aberdeen Washington strongly requests that cities and other governing bodies responsible for current permits consider rescinding current permits and deny future permitting in light of new information regarding rail safety and the volatility and explosiveness of the crude oil products involved; this information not being presented at the time of the original permit requests.

The City Council of Aberdeen Washington strongly urges the Washington Department of Transportation and the Freight Mobility Strategic Investment board to analyze and study the potential economic effect of this oil train traffic on the displacement of existing economic activity and the potential loss of access to rail transport by local and regional shippers.

The City Council of Aberdeen Washington requests that Governor Inslee, in accordance with the Centennial accord between the federally recognized Indian tribes and the state of Washington established in 1989, work directly with the Skokomish Indian Tribe, Chehalis Confederated tribes, the Nisqually tribe, the Squaxin Island tribe, the Quinault Indian nation, the Shoalwater Bay Tribe and other such tribes as are necessary to protect their treaty rights and fishing resources which are threatened by proposed oil terminals, expanding oil refineries and the routing through their territories of crude oil unit trains carrying Bakken, tar sands and other crude oil.