

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4704

May 18, 2017

The Honorable Elaine Chao
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Chao,

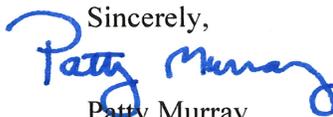
I am writing in support of an application submitted by the Port of Moses Lake to the U.S. Department of Transportation's *Fostering Advancements in Shipping and Transportation for the Long-term Achievement of National Efficiencies (FASTLANE)* program for the Northern Columbia Basin Railroad project.

The Port of Moses Lake is seeking a FASTLANE grant to reroute, rehabilitate, and build 11.7 miles of railroad to restore rail service and eliminate several at grade rail crossings in downtown Moses Lake. These modifications would reduce congestion and expand freight rail service to over 1,500 acres of industrial land adjacent to the Grant County International Airport. The project would redirect the current rail line that runs through downtown to a new route that runs west through the Wheeler Industrial Corridor, establishing access to an additional 1,000 acres of industrial land. This new segment would connect to existing tracks which would be upgraded to meet current standards. Additionally, the project would build a new rail extension that connects all three segments to Grant County International Airport, providing a link to the Burlington Northern Santa Fe mainline and rail service to several industrial areas.

The Northern Columbia Basin Railroad project would increase safety, improve freight mobility, and allow greater public access to waterfront property to increase the quality of life for residents and tourists alike. Improving rail infrastructure in Grant County would provide critical transportation options for existing businesses and manufacturing, including five Japanese companies which collectively employ about 1,270 people. In addition, allowing the Port of Moses Lake and others to compete for new investment opportunities could strengthen the U.S.-Japan bilateral trade relationship.

Thank you for your consideration of the Port of Moses Lake's application. Please contact Samara Ressler in my Washington, D.C. office at 202-224-2621 with any questions.

Sincerely,



Patty Murray
United States Senator

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