

NORTH COAST RAILROAD AUTHORITY

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North Coast Railroad Authority (NCRA) Chairman Allan Hemphill of Cloverdale today announced the release of NCRA's Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for freight train operations on a 142 mile stretch of the Northwestern Pacific (NWP) line between Napa County (lombard) and Willits in Mendocino County (The Russian River Division).

\$35 million in state funds has already been invested to repair the first 62 miles of the line from the national rail interchange near American Canyon (lombard) to Windsor with freight service scheduled to begin on this phase in October. The NCRA has applied for \$36 million in federal economic stimulus funds to continue repairs North to Willits.

Today's submittal of the DEIR begins a 45-day comment period under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) which allows the public to respond to NCRA's plans to restart freight service. A public hearing on the DEIR has also been set for April 15 at 6:30 p.m. at the Petaluma Community Center.

Before railroad operations commence, the NCRA Board of Directors must respond to all public comments and incorporate the responses in a Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) which the Board of Directors must certify.

"This 2 volume document cost \$3.5 million to complete and painstakingly analyzes every potential impact of train service on the Russian River Division between the interchange with the Union Pacific (lombard) and Willits," Hemphill said.

"What's clear from the DEIR is that trains will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, take trucks off of 101, save energy and provide a cost-effective means to ship goods in and out of the North Coast," he said.

The DEIR projects three round-trip freight trains per week shipping feed grains, building materials, wine and other general merchandise increasing to three roundtrips per day by the second or third year of operations.

The public can review the Executive Summary of the DEIR on NCRA's website
www.northcoastrailroad.org

The North Coast Railroad Authority (NCRA) was formed in 1989 by the California Legislature under the North Coast Railroad Authority Act, Government Code Section 93000, et seq. The mission of the North Coast Railroad Authority is to provide a unified & revitalized rail infrastructure meeting the freight and passenger needs of the region; a first class service working in partnership with others to build and sustain the economy of the region.

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