



CALIFORNIA FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS DIVISION

1127-11TH STREET, SUITE 626, SACRAMENTO, CA 95814 · PHONE (916) 446-4647

June 5, 2008

Honorable Pat Eklund
Mayor, Novato City Council
75 Rowland Way #200
Novato, CA 94945

Re: Northwestern Pacific Rail Line Restoration

Dear Mayor Eklund:

The California Farm Bureau Federation (Farm Bureau) is in support of the restoration of the Northwestern Pacific rail line freight service and believes the overall economic and environmental benefits of providing such a service outweighs the disadvantages. Farm Bureau represents over 91,000 members and is dedicated to ensuring a safe, abundant and affordable food supply. Agriculture is important to California contributing close to \$32 billion to the state's economy. Reliable and affordable transportation is an important issue for our members. The ability to secure the materials and equipment necessary for production of the food and fiber agriculture produces, as well as the ability to move the goods produced is of prime concern.

Marin County has benefited from more than \$27 million in revenue provided by the county's 28 dairies, and special consideration should be given to their needs. As you have heard from Marin County Farm Bureau's President Dominic Grossi, "The cost to produce milk in Marin is about \$3.00 per hundred pounds of milk more than the cost in the Central Valley." This cost is directly related to the additional shipping costs of trucking the feed from the Central Valley. A freight rail line could significantly reduce that cost.

California's highway system is outdated and over loaded. Traffic congestion is a daily occurrence on much of our highway system. Trucking is the dominant mode of shipping with truck volumes approaching staggering levels on the highway system. Today the average highway mile carries 10,500 trucks and it is estimated that number will rise to 22,700 by 2035. To put it in more personal terms that means for a motorist changing a tire on the side of the highway, a truck will pass every 3.5 seconds (American Association of State Highway and Transportation Offices Report 2007).

Expanded rail capacity has the potential of removing millions of tons of freight and truck vehicle miles from the highways, in addition to the savings in highway maintenance and repair costs. All modes of transportation play a critically important role in transporting goods, but freight rail service provides cost effective transportation especially for heavy and bulky materials.

Restoration of the Northwestern Pacific rail system would benefit the public and the environment in terms of reducing air pollution, reducing the number of trucks on the road, reducing shipping cost and increasing options for shippers to move product and materials to market and to the farm.

We understand the concerns the restoration of the rail line presents, but those concerns are not insurmountable and could be addressed by open and continuous dialogue with all interested parties. Farm Bureau urges careful consideration of the many benefits a freight rail service can provide for all North Coast residents and businesses.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Andrea Fox".

Legislative Coordinator

cc: Mayor Pro Tem, Jim Leland
Council Member, Carole Knutson
Council Member, Madeline Kellner
Council Member, Jeanne MacLeamy
President, Dominic Grossi, Marin County Farm Bureau
Executive Director, Lex McCorvey, Sonoma County Farm Bureau
Executive Director, Mitch Stogner, North Coast Railroad Authority