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**Washington State
Department of Transportation**

Douglas B. MacDonald
Secretary of Transportation

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September 13, 2006

Victoria Rutson
Chief, Section of Environmental Analysis
Surface Transportation Board
1925 K Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20006

Re: Northern Columbia Basin Railroad Project in Moses Lake, Washington
Co-Lead Status

Dear Ms. Rutson:

Thank you very much for your letter of August 7, 2006 inviting the Washington State Department of Transportation to act as co-lead with the United States Department of Transportation Surface Transportation Board to complete the environmental analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act for the subject project. We are very pleased to accept the invitation, and look forward to working with you and your agency to complete this task.

We recently requested our consultant, HDR, Inc., to provide us with a proposed scope of work for the needed analysis. I will meet with Kurt Reichelt and Linda Amato of that company on September 14, 2006 to review the company's proposal. After making any changes that may be appropriate, we will forward the proposed scope for your review, comment and/or concurrence.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael E. Rowswell".

Michael E. Rowswell
Freight Rail Services Manager

cc: Kathryn A. Kusske Floyd, Mayer, Brown, Rowe & Maw L.L.P.
Craig Baldwin, Port of Moses Lake
Kurt Reichelt, HDR, Inc.