

PRESS RELEASE

Northern Columbia Basin Rail Project Achieves Major Milestone

The Port of Moses Lake's Northern Columbia Basin Rail Project received long-awaited Federal Rail Administration authorization this week with their approval of updated environmental documentation.

The rail project received \$20.9 million in state funding in 2015. The Port also won approval for \$9.9 million in federal funding through a FASTLANE grant in 2016. The federal government, however, added a new requirement to update the project's environmental analysis before releasing those funds. The update, along with public comment and technical review, has taken nearly three years to complete.

Port of Moses Lake Commission President Stroud Kunkle reacted to the federal decision,

"The Port of Moses Lake is relieved to finally receive federal approval to move forward with this project. Several years ago, the community joined together to support this plan because of the opportunities it creates for our region and the benefits to the City of Moses Lake. We are delighted with this week's decision"

The project will bring a rail connection to the Port of Moses Lake by constructing a new rail line along the Wheeler Industrial Corridor and linking to the existing Columbia Basin Railroad.

Senator Judy Warnick, a long-time champion for the project, reacted with,

"I'm excited to see this major milestone achieved. This project will allow the City of Moses Lake to evaluate options for lands along the waterfront and bring new products and manufacturing opportunities to the Port of Moses Lake. This project has been under consideration in our community for decades, and I'm pleased that we are on the verge of seeing it implemented"

The Port has continued to invest in engineering, planning, design and right of way assessment. Based on this work, the Port has presented a staged implementation plan to the federal agencies to accommodate engineering standards and funding constraints.

Executive Director Don Kersey outlined the next steps for the project,

"The Port, and its partners, still have much work ahead. We must reach agreement with the federal agencies on the proposed staged implementation plan, initiate appraisals and reach agreement for acquisition of right of way along the Wheeler Corridor before construction can begin."

Kersey thanked long-time supporters and partners who have patiently advocated and championed the rail line,

“We would like to acknowledge the support of the Moses Lake community who worked so hard on the initial planning and feasibility studies. The Port also acknowledges the efforts of Congressman Dan Newhouse, Senator Patty Murray, Senator Maria Cantwell, Senator Judy Warnick, Representative Tom Dent, Representative Alex Ybarra, the Federal Rail Administration and many state and local officials who have steadfastly supported our efforts to reach this milestone. We are excited to move to the next phase of implementation”

For further information on this project contact:

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Port of Moses Lake: An aviation, manufacturing, and technology hub in the Pacific Northwest. Home to Grant County International Airport, one of the largest airports in the Western United States.

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