

**SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD'S SECTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS  
ISSUES ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT WITH WASHINGTON STATE DEPT. OF  
TRANSPORTATION FOR PROPOSED NORTHERN COLUMBIA BASIN RAILROAD  
PROJECT**

The Surface Transportation Board announced today that its Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) and the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) have issued an Environmental Assessment (EA) for public review and comment concerning the proposed Northern Columbia Basin Railroad Project (Project) in the State of Washington. Working together as co-lead agencies on the Project's environmental review, the Board and WSDOT are providing the public 30 days—until **December 8, 2008**—for the filing of comments on the EA.

The EA identifies and analyzes the potential environmental impacts (both beneficial and adverse) that could occur as a result of the Project. The EA also sets forth preliminary recommended mitigation measures to minimize or avoid adverse environmental impacts, should the Board approve the proposal. At the conclusion of the comment period, SEA and WSDOT will prepare a Final Environmental Assessment (Final EA) in response to the comments received. The Board will then issue a final decision, based on all public and agency comments received in the public record in this proceeding, addressing the transportation merits of the proposal and the entire environmental record, including the EA and the Final EA.

To facilitate public participation on all aspects of the EA, SEA and WSDOT will hold a Public Open House on **November 20, 2008 in Moses Lake, WA** to present the EA's findings and to receive comments. Instructions for how to submit comments, which **must be postmarked December 8, 2008**, as well as information about the venue, date, and time of the Public Open House in Moses Lake, are attached as a Fact Sheet.

The EA was issued today, November 7, 2008, in [Northern Columbia Basin Railroad Project—Construction Exemption—in Moses Lake, Washington, STB Finance Docket No. 34936](#) and in *Northern Columbia Basin Railroad Project—Acquisition Exemption—in Moses Lake, Washington*, STB Finance Docket No. 34936 (Sub-No. 1). The EA is available for viewing and downloading via the Board's Web site, at <http://www.stb.dot.gov>, under "E-Library," then under "Decisions & Notices," beneath the date "11/07/08." A Fact Sheet is attached.

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**ATTACHMENT**

**FACT SHEET**

Comments on the Environmental Assessment (EA) issued today, November 7, 2008, in *Northern Columbia Basin Railroad Project—Construction Exemption—in Moses Lake, Washington*, STB Finance Docket No. 34936 and in *Northern Columbia Basin Railroad Project—Acquisition Exemption—in Moses Lake, Washington*, STB Finance Docket No. 34936 (Sub-No. 1), must be **postmarked by December 8, 2008**, and can be submitted as set forth below.

The Surface Transportation Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) and the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), working together as co-lead agencies for the environmental review of the proposed Project, will co-host a **November 20, 2008 Public Open House** in the **State of Washington** to present the EA's findings and to receive public comments. The **Public Open House** will be held **from 4:00 – 7:00 p.m. Pacific Standard Time**, on **Thursday, November 20**, at the **Grant County International Airport, 7810 Andrews Street, NE, Moses Lake, WA 98837**.

Comments may be submitted as follows:

**Written Comments:** Comments may be submitted in hard-copy form at the Public Open House or **postmarked by December 8, 2008** and mailed to either SEA or WSDOT at the following addresses:

<b>ATTN: 34936</b>	<b>ATTN: 34936</b>
<b>Christa Dean</b>	<b>Elizabeth Phinney</b>
<b>Section of Environmental Analysis Surface Transportation Board</b>	<b>Washington State Department of Transportation, Rail Office</b>
<b>395 E Street, SW, Room 1108</b>	<b>P.O. Box 47407</b>
<b>Washington, DC 20423-0001</b>	<b>Olympia, WA 98504-7407</b>

In addition, comment forms will be provided at the Public Open House.

**Electronic Comments:** Comments may be filed electronically via the Board's Web site, at <http://www.stb.dot.gov>, by clicking the "E-FILING" button on the home page then, when the "Welcome" page appears, by clicking the "**Environmental Comments**" link at the center-right of the page. Basic name and address information is next requested, and provision is made for the submission of "PDF" attachments. To fill one or more of the final, "**Attachments**" boxes, filers need only click the "**Browse...**" button to the right of the boxes and select the name of their electronic PDF file(s) from among the file names that will be displayed.

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