



Confederated Tribes and Bands
of the Yakama Nation

Established by the
Treaty of June 9, 1855

September 6, 2022

The Honorable Amit Bose
Administrator
Federal Railroad Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 NEW JERSEY AVENUE, SE
WASHINGTON, DC 20590

RE: Federal Rail Administration Docket No. FRA-2022-0031 Expression of Interest

Dear Administrator Bose:

The Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation (Nation) respectfully request your help in laying the groundwork for improving our transportation network, and specifically, restoring passenger rail service to Central and Eastern Washington via the Stampede Pass corridor. The Nation and some of its members gave up land for the railway to be established and was given the right to travel in the Yakama Treaty of 1855. At the time rail service was one of the main sources of travel, now the passenger service no longer operates and has not for some time, if passenger services are restored it would offer our tribal members as well as other community members another mode of travel.

As you know, the Joint Transportation Committee completed a study in July 2020 regarding the feasibility of restoring the Stampede Pass service. Among the findings were: that the service is technically and operationally feasible, there is a high level of community support, and annual ridership is estimated to be “above or comparable to some Amtrak state-supported services”. The study also states that “further work will be required to confirm or refine its findings”.

The 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) makes available \$66 billion in federal funds for passenger and freight rail. Among the provisions in the BIL, Section 25101 provides a specific program to facilitate the development of intercity passenger rail corridors such as the Stampede Pass route from Seattle to Spokane.

The funding opportunities for passenger rail infrastructure provided by the BIL opens the door to projects that may have previously seemed prohibitively expensive such as the restoration of service via Stampede Pass.

Rail helps improve air quality, provide a cleaner environment, and reverse climate change. Passenger rail is three times more efficient than a car on a passenger mile basis at current occupancy levels. Freight rail is eleven times more efficient than trucks on a ton-mile basis. Transportation accounts for 29% of U. S. greenhouse gas emissions. Investment in rail and other public transportation is a key part of making transportation cleaner. The quickest way to reduce

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greenhouse gasses from transportation is to travel by train, and move goods by rail, instead of by road or air. In addition to these environmental benefits, improved passenger rail will provide economic benefits, and underserved communities will reap improved equity as well.

Begin the process of restoring passenger rail service via the Stampede Pass corridor.

If you have any further questions or concerns contact, HollyAnna Littlebull at 509-865-5121 extension 6742 or via email at hollyanna_littlebull@yakama.com.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gerald Lewis". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "G".

Gerald Lewis, Chairman
Yakama Nation Tribal Council