



Centre Region Council of Governments OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATION

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September 22, 2010

Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423

Attention: Danielle Gosselin
Section of Environmental Analysis
Environmental Filing FD 35116

RE: Draft Environmental Impact Statement
R.J. Corman Railroad Company/Pennsylvania Lines Inc.
Docket Number FD_35116_0

Dear Ms. Gosselin:

The Centre Region Council of Governments (COG) is a voluntary organization comprised of elected officials representing over 85,000 residents in six municipalities located in Centre County, Pennsylvania. The COG's Transportation and Land Use (TLU) Committee is a subcommittee consisting of elected officials from each of the six participating municipalities and the Pennsylvania State University.

On September 15, 2010, the TLU Committee discussed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the new construction/reactivation of approximately 20 miles of rail line by the R.J. Corman Railroad/Pennsylvania Lines Inc., a portion of which is located in Centre County. At the meeting, the TLU Committee noted that the Centre Region COG is on record as opposing the development of the landfill that would be served by the rail line because of the safety, environmental and economic consequences of the project.

The TLU Committee voted unanimously to forward COG's previous positions to the STB for consideration as it completes the Final EIS for the rail project.

Specific actions from COG include:

- January 2005 - The COG General Forum voted to recommend that the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania not financially support the construction of the proposed landfill because of significant safety, environmental, and economic concerns. The recommendation was sent to Governor Ed Rendell.
- February 2005 - The COG TLU Committee voted to request the Centre County Metropolitan Planning Organization (CCMPO) to not support the expenditure of \$8.5 million in state capital funds for transportation improvements that would service the proposed landfill.

The COG TLU Committee also noted that the CCMPO, which is responsible for countywide long range transportation planning and funding for roadway, bridge and public transit projects, previously took several actions about transportation items related to the proposed landfill:

- January 2005 and March 2005 - Following extensive discussions on January 25 and March 22, 2005, the CCMPO Coordinating Committee voted to continue supporting the expenditure of \$555,195 in federal Transportation Enhancements (TE) Program funds for the rehabilitation of the Peale Tunnel as part of the Snow Shoe Rail Trail. The CCMPO requested that DEP require a 300 yard buffer from the trail in any permit issued for the landfill. The Peale Tunnel is located along a section of the rail line proposed for reactivation.
- March 2005 - The CCMPO Coordinating Committee voted to recommend that state funds not be provided for the development of transportation improvements at the proposed landfill, including funding for the reactivation of a rail line traversing the landfill site; and construction of a new interchange on Interstate 80 to serve the proposed landfill. The recommendation was sent to Governor Rendell.
- September 2005 - The CCMPO Coordinating Committee voted to find that the proposed interchange on I-80 was not consistent with the CCMPO's adopted Long Range Transportation Plan. In a related action, in September 2005 the Centre County Board of Commissioners found that the proposed interchange on I-80 was not consistent with the Centre County Comprehensive Plan.
- March 2006 - The CCMPO Coordinating Committee voted to defer a request by Rush Township to include the proposed I-80 interchange on the LRTP until the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection issues a permit for the proposed landfill.

The TLU Committee strongly reiterates the importance of the actions taken by the officials who comprise the COG and CCMPO, and urges the STB to carefully consider the position of elected officials who represent residents affected by the reactivation of the rail line and the development of the proposed landfill.

We urge the STB to support the desires of Centre Region municipalities by not approving the project.

Sincerely,



Jeff Luck, Chair
Centre Region COG TLU Committee

Copies: COG General Forum
James C. Steff, COG Executive Director
James J. May, CCMPO Secretary