

UpState RailConnect Committee

Dedicated to Completion of the Alternative Rail Route Feasibility Study

December 6, 2012

Dear Supporter,

On behalf of the *UpState RailConnect Committee*, I would like to thank you for your continued support of a study to explore the feasibility of an east-west rail line connecting the deepwater harbor at Humboldt Bay to the national rail system in the Sacramento Valley. I am writing to give you an update on the extensive amount of progress that has been made over the past 11 months in that effort and how your continued support is vital for its success.

As you will recall, a grass-roots citizen-led effort in December 2011 brought the concept of a new east-west rail route into the spotlight. On January 17, 2012, the City of Eureka took action to lead an effort to inform other governmental agencies and organizations of the concept. In less than 10 months, the City of Eureka has received support from your organization and over 33 other government agencies, labor, business, education, law enforcement and citizen groups representing a vast portion of Northern California including some statewide and national organizations. Although the number of supporters continues to grow, I have attached a list of the supporters to-date and a recent media release, for your information.

In addition to the broad spectrum of support for the feasibility study, there has been significant progress in research and organization of the study process. To-date, there are five groups that are actively coordinating the pursuit of the "Alternative Rail Route Feasibility Study". Specifically, these are the City of Eureka; the East-West Rail Advocates; the Humboldt Bay Harbor Working Group; the Land Bridge Alliance; and the *UpState RailConnect Committee*. The roles of these various groups are summarized as follows:

City of Eureka (COE): As noted, at the City Council meeting of January 17, 2012, the Eureka City Council approved a resolution in favor of conducting a study to determine the feasibility of an alternative rail route connecting the port facilities in Humboldt Bay to the national rail system. With this action, the City of Eureka took the lead to explore support for the Alternative rail Route Feasibility Study. In less than 10 months, the City of Eureka garnered support from 33 government agencies, labor, business, education, law enforcement and citizen groups representing a vast portion of Northern California. The City of Eureka was recently awarded a \$25,000 grant from the State's Housing and Community Development agency to fund coordination of the *UpState RailConnect Committee* and pursuit of funding to complete the Alternative Rail Route Feasibility Study.

East-West Rail Advocates (EWRA): This is the formal name of the grass-roots group that asked the Eureka City Council to support the concept of an east-west rail feasibility study and has been meeting nearly weekly ever since January 2012 in order to coordinate the educational needs for the promotion of the feasibility study. The group has defined itself as "a working group dedicated to the completion of the Alternative Rail Route Feasibility Study". The EWRA also functioned as the "East-West Rail Action Team" as part of Humboldt County's Prosperity 2012 process.

Humboldt Bay Harbor Working Group (HBHWG): Formed in November of 2011, the Humboldt Bay Harbor Working Group began as an offshoot of a MoveOn council which at the time was exploring job opportunities. From the very beginning the focus of the group was JOBS. It was discovered that there is a huge potential for job creation in the harbor that is not being tapped with one of the main reasons being the lack of an active rail connection from Humboldt Bay's harbor to the national rail

system. The goal of the group is " *To reach community agreement on projects to revitalize the harbor that provide jobs and maintains the integrity of the environment*".

Since November 2011, the HBHWG has conducted a great deal of research and participated in Humboldt County's Prosperity 2012 process as the "Revitalize the Harbor Action Team". In order to revitalize the harbor portion of Humboldt Bay, the HBHWG proposes two priority recommendations. Priority Recommendation 1 is to sponsor community forums to inform the public about the harbor to generate conversations on economic development. Priority Recommendation 2 is to seek adoption of a resolution from each local agency with land use authority over the harbor portion of Humboldt Bay affirming their commitment to create jobs and sustainable growth through Humboldt Bay's harbor. These agencies include the City of Eureka, County of Humboldt, Wiyot Tribe and the Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation and Conservation District. The resolution contains six action initiatives that recommend cooperation and coordination amongst these four agencies with respect to supporting and promoting many forms of maritime commerce; supporting enhancements to other transportation modes such as highway improvements and rail service connecting to the national rail system; completing a one-year planning process for a 12 year "2025 Harbor Action Initiative"; developing within one-year a coordinated marketing plan; obtaining financing for infrastructure projects and equipment; and working with existing maritime industries to avoid, minimize or mitigate environmental impacts and assist in environmental compliance.

As of November 2012, the City of Eureka has unanimously approved a Resolution affirming their commitment to create jobs and sustainable growth through Humboldt Bay's harbor. The Wiyot Tribe and County of Humboldt are considering a similar Resolution by the end of 2012. The Harbor District has not yet been scheduled.

Land Bridge Alliance (LA): The Land Bridge Alliance is a California non-profit organization formed to promote a new rail link bridging the isolated coastal communities with those of the Sacramento Valley in Northern California. The Land Bridge Alliance was formed through a perceived need by the members of the East-West Rail Advocates to have an organization that could accept private funding for use in funding the Alternative Rail Route Feasibility Study and to provide educational outreach for the concept of an east-west rail line. LA was officially formed in October 2012.
www.landbridgealliance.org

UpState RailConnect Committee (URCC): The *UpState RailConnect Committee* was created to formalize this now regional effort to study the feasibility of an East West Rail Route through a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the County stakeholders (Humboldt, Trinity, and Tehama); the City of Eureka; and the Upstate California Economic Development Council. The general purpose of the URCC is to coordinate the production of the Humboldt Bay Alternative Rail Route Feasibility Study. Specifically, the purpose of the URCC is to gather public input; conduct public outreach efforts in each member agencies region; review documents such as Request for Proposals, consultant submittals, draft and final reports; participate in consultant selection; provide consultant oversight; assist with grant writing and local technical in-kind efforts; and other tasks as mutually agreed upon by the members. There is no financial obligation created on any of the member agencies.

UpState RailConnect Committee Members include:

City of Eureka: Councilmember Lance Madsen, Councilmember Mike Newman, City Manager David Tyson

County of Humboldt: Supervisor Clif Clendenen, Supervisor Rex Bohn, CAO Phillip Smith-Hanes

County of Trinity: Supervisor Debra Chapman, Supervisor-elect John Fenley, CAO Wendy Tyler

County of Tehama: Supervisor Gregg Avilla, Supervisor-elect Steve Chamblin, CAO Bill Goodwin

Upstate California Economic Development Council: Board President Brynda Stranix, General Manager Alison O'Sullivan

A proposed scope of work for the Feasibility Study could include:

- a) Identification of a proposed route and alternatives
- b) Identification of land ownerships
- c) Assessment of market potential
- d) A conceptual development plan that will include:
 - (1) Ownership/governance of the rail line
 - (2) Prelim engineering
 - (3) Highway/port connectors
 - (4) Additional uses of the corridor (fiber optic, trail, etc)
 - (5) Estimated permitting needs
 - (6) Estimated environmental issues and mitigations
 - (7) Estimated development costs and timelines

The URCC was officially formed on October 16, 2012 and met for the first time on November 14, 2012.

I hope that the above summary has given you an informative update on the progress to initiate the "Alternative Rail Route Feasibility Study". As you can see, a lot of progress has been made to lay the groundwork for this important study. Although there are many opinions out there as to the "best" route, what will be shipped, who will use such a line and what it will cost, as Chair of the *UpState RailConnect Committee*, I want to assure you that nothing has been decided and that all of those questions and more are to be explored by the feasibility study itself.

Thank you again for your support. With your support, various support organizations in place and a broad Northern California agency participation, we look forward to obtaining the funding and initiating the feasibility study in 2013. If you need any additional information regarding the Alternative Rail Route Feasibility Study or its process, or would like us to meet with you or make a presentation to your organization, please let me know. For additional information on the study, please see http://www.ci.eureka.ca.gov/depts/council/rail_study.asp.

Sincerely,

Lance Madsen, Chair
UpState RailConnect Committee

*Council Member,
Eureka City Council*

C: UpState RailConnect Committee

**Humboldt Bay Alternative Rail Route Feasibility Study
Support Letters as of November 2012**

Public Agencies

- City of Eureka, CA
- City of Fortuna, CA
- City of Rio Dell, CA
- County of Humboldt, CA
- County of Trinity, CA
- County of Tehama, CA
- Wiyot Tribe
- Northern California Tribal Chairman's Association
- Humboldt State University
- Humboldt County Office of Education
- Humboldt County Sheriff's Office
- Shasta-Trinity National Forest
- Six Rivers National Forest

Business, Labor, Law Enforcement and Citizen Organizations

- Union Pacific Railroad
- Northwestern Pacific Railroad Company
- The Greater Eureka Chamber of Commerce
- Humboldt Redwood Company
- California Marine and Intermodal Transportation System Advisory Council
- Upstate California Economic Development Council
- California Association for Local Economic Development
- Humboldt Association of Realtors

- Building and Construction Trades Department of the American Federation of Labor – Congress of Industrial Organizations
- State Building and Construction Trades Council of California
- Building and Construction Trades Council of Humboldt and Del Norte Counties
- International Longshore and Warehouse Union, Local 14
- Operating Engineers Local 3
- Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers Local No. 3, California
- Central Labor Council, AFL-CIO of Humboldt and Del Norte Counties

- Eureka Police Officer's Association
- Humboldt Deputy Sheriff's Organization

- East-West Rail Advocates
- Land Bridge Alliance
- Rail and Port Infrastructure Task Force
- Humboldt Bay Harbor Working Group

UpState RailConnect Committee

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MEDIA RELEASE

November 19, 2012

For Immediate Release

UpState RailConnect Committee Kicks off East-West Rail Feasibility Study Process

Contact: Lance Madsen, Chair (707) 616-8621

Less than one-month after forming the *UpState RailConnect Committee*, the group met in Weaverville to kick off the process for the Alternative Rail Route Feasibility Study. During the three-hour meeting, the Committee members discussed various organizational tasks as well as study specifics.

Under organizational items, the Committee appointed Eureka Councilmember Lance Madsen as Chair and Humboldt County Supervisor Rex Bohn as Vice-Chair. The Committee also agreed that this process was to be as open and transparent as possible.

Under process-specific items, the Committee discussed potential public and private sources of funding for the feasibility study. The Committee also discussed a non-profit organization called the *Landbridge Alliance* and its role in accepting private donations dedicated to the feasibility study. The Committee agreed that the feasibility study process will be a "public" process regardless of whether the funds are from public, private or a combination of funding sources. In addition, the Committee discussed the components of a scope of work for the feasibility study. Committee members were tasked with developing a public input process tailored to each of the members' jurisdiction in order to receive the most complete set of comments and concerns to be addressed in the feasibility study.

The *UpState RailConnect Committee* evolved from a grass-roots citizen-led effort in December 2011 that brought into the spotlight the alternative rail route concept to connect Humboldt Bay's harbor to the national rail network. On January 17, 2012, the City of Eureka took action to lead an effort to inform other governmental agencies of the concept. In less than 10 months, the City of Eureka garnered support from 33 government agencies, labor, business, education, law enforcement and citizen groups representing a vast portion of Northern California. The *UpState RailConnect Committee* is comprised of members from the City of Eureka; County of Humboldt; County of Trinity; County of Tehama and the Upstate California Economic Development Council. The Committee's role is to:

- Conduct public outreach and develop the scope of work for the feasibility study
- Obtain funding for the feasibility study
- Retain a consultant to complete the feasibility study
- Oversee consultant activities
- And if found to be feasible, the Committee will use feasibility study results to identify capital and investors

Committee members in attendance at this meeting included City of Eureka Councilmember Lance Madsen, Councilmember Mike Newman, City Manager David Tyson; County of Humboldt Supervisor Rex Bohn, CAO Phillip Smith-Hanes; County of Trinity Supervisor-elect John Fenley, CAO Wendy Tyler; County of Tehama Supervisor-elect Steve Chamblin, CAO Bill Goodwin; and Upstate California Economic Development Council General Manager Alison O'Sullivan. ###
