



City of Seattle Legislative Information Service

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Resolution Number: 31504

A RESOLUTION related to petroleum transport by rail through Seattle and the State of Washington; urging adoption of state legislation and federal regulations; state assessment of risks; railroad company restriction of petroleum transport through Seattle; and update of City incident response plans to address the potential safety, environmental, and economic impacts of petroleum transport by rail.

Status: In committee

Date for Full Council consideration: March 10, 2014

Date introduced/referred to committee: February 18, 2014

Committee: Planning, Land Use, and Sustainability

Sponsor: O'BRIEN

Committee Recommendation: Adopt as Amended

Date of Committee Recommendation: March 4, 2014

Committee Vote: 3(O'Brien, Clark, Licata)-0

Index Terms: RAILROADS, SAFETY, EMERGENCY-MANAGEMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL-PROTECTION

Fiscal Note: [Fiscal Note to Resolution 31504](#)

Text

CITY OF SEATTLE

RESOLUTION _____

A RESOLUTION related to petroleum transport by rail through Seattle and the State of Washington; urging adoption of state legislation and federal regulations; state assessment of risks; railroad company restriction of petroleum transport through Seattle; and update of City incident response plans to address the potential safety, environmental, and economic impacts of petroleum transport by rail.

WHEREAS, new technologies have resulted in the development of unprecedented amounts of both domestic and foreign oil, natural gas, tar sands, bitumen, and other petroleum products and derivatives, which will significantly increase the volume of petroleum and petroleum products moving by rail through Oregon and Washington from the first dedicated train in 2012 to a possible volume of nearly 800,000 barrels per day, if all proposed projects are built; and

WHEREAS, the volume of petroleum-by-rail moving through Seattle is expected to triple to over one million barrels per week; and

WHEREAS, the primary source of the petroleum anticipated to be transported by rail through Seattle is from the Bakken formation, which the U.S. Department of Transportation Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration has determined may be more flammable than traditional heavy crude oil; and

WHEREAS, the rail lines that will carry this petroleum run through and by Seattle's neighborhoods, parks, business and industrial areas, sporting arenas and stadiums, and along our waterfront, creeks, and other natural areas; and

WHEREAS, rail traffic also moves beneath downtown Seattle in an underground tunnel with no fire protection systems and limited emergency egress or ventilation; and

WHEREAS, recent derailments, spills, and fires, such as the recent derailment and explosion in Casselton, North Dakota, illustrate the potential catastrophic impacts which could occur to our community and environment from the transport of petroleum by rail; and

WHEREAS, the transport of large volumes of fossil fuels such as petroleum is not compatible with the City of Seattle's role as a regional and national leader in addressing climate change or with the City's established goal of being carbon neutral by 2050; and

WHEREAS, the City of Seattle is deeply concerned about the threat to life, safety and the environment of potential spills and fires from the transport of petroleum by rail; NOW THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE, THE MAYOR CONCURRING, THAT:

Section 1. The City of Seattle strongly urges Washington State to adopt legislation requiring disclosure of the volumes, types of petroleum, petroleum products, and petroleum derivatives; transportation routes; and the frequency and duration of transfers of petroleum, so that the state and local communities can be fully informed of and plan for the risks posed by the transport of petroleum by rail.

Section 2. The City of Seattle strongly urges the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) to increase federal tank car design and operation regulations for petroleum product shipments and aggressively phase out older-model tank cars used to move flammable liquids that are not retrofitted to meet new federal requirements.

Section 3. The City of Seattle strongly urges the Washington Department of Ecology and the Military Department Emergency Management Division, in collaboration with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Coast Guard and local government emergency response entities, to assess the impact to public safety, the environment, the economy, and traffic of petroleum transport by rail through Seattle and the State of Washington.

Section 4. The City of Seattle requests that the Governor of Washington, the Washington Department of Ecology, the Washington State Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council, and any other relevant state agencies refrain from permitting projects that would expand the capacity for petroleum export out of the state or otherwise increase the number of trains carrying petroleum through Seattle and other Washington communities until the cumulative environmental and safety impacts of these projects are studied and addressed.

Section 5. The City of Seattle requests that any railroad company that operates rail lines adjacent to Seattle's sporting arenas, stadiums, and beneath the City in underground tunnels consider restrictions on the shipment of petroleum products along those routes until adequate study by relevant state, local, and federal government agencies have determined that the transport of petroleum by rail meets established public safety and environmental protection standards.

Section 6. The City Council requests that the Seattle Fire Department and Seattle Office of Emergency Management to review and, if needed, update the City's incident response plans for the increasing risk imposed by the transport of petroleum by rail with a report back to the relevant committees of the City Council by June 20, 2014.

Adopted by the City Council the ____ day of _____, 2014, and signed by me in open session in authentication of its adoption this _____ day

of _____, 2014.

President _____ of the City Council

THE MAYOR CONCURRING:

Edward B. Murray, Mayor

Filed by me this ____ day of _____, 2014.

Monica Martinez Simmons, City Clerk

(Seal)

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