

**Rail Service Competition Council
Economic Development Subcommittee Teleconference
January 16, 2018
Minutes**

Participants

- Co-chair Walt Ainsworth
- Co-chair Kathy Fasso, Port of Montana
- Kraig McLeod, Montana Department of Transportation (MDT)
- Ross Lane, BNSF Railway (BNSF)
- Eric Doheny
- Katy Callon, MDT
- Sen. Tom Facey
- Mary Vandenbosch, RSCC Administrative Support

Walt Ainsworth called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

Issues with Transportation of Pulse Crops

Eric Doheny described the situation with shipping pulse crops out of Montana. With the exception of yellow peas, pulse crops are primarily shipped by truck. Less than 20% of his crops are shipped by rail.

Subcommittee members discussed issues that affect shipping pulse crops: BNSF is pushing 100-unit trains; containers are owned by the steamship lines and they don't want to position unloaded equipment in Montana for a long period of time; lack of processing facilities in Montana; the need to track the shipment from field to final destination; and tariffs affecting the international market.

Opportunities for Transportation of Pulse Crops

Eric Doheny explained that most processing currently takes place outside of Montana. Companies are starting to bring processing facilities to Montana. More processing facilities are likely to come online in the next two to four years. Processing capacity is expected to expand. There is a small Stricks Ag processing facility in Chester. There are rumors about Mountain View Co-Op building a first stage processing facility at Collins, between Great Falls and Shelby.

Subcommittee members discussed the possibility of shipping bagged pulse crops in box cars. Four truckloads can be loaded in one box car, which can be transported on a manifest train.

There are several facilities in Montana with existing rail infrastructure (e.g., loop track, place to store box cars, etc.)

Next Steps

The subcommittee decided to explore opportunities for shipping pulse crops by box car as follows:

- Kathy Fasso: Cost of transporting box car to Port of Long Beach, CA. Cost of transloading to a container in Long Beach. Transit time.
- Ross Lane: Cost of transporting box car to Port of Tacoma, WA from Shelby, Montana. Transit time. Identify contact in Plentywood, Montana.
- Walt Ainsworth: Contact appropriate persons in Plentywood re: transport of pulse crops via rail.
- Eric Doheny. Make inquiries about shipping by box car in locations he works with. Identify rail line.

Other Opportunities

Ross Lane noted that BNSF and Montana Rail Link have intermodal service from the Pacific Northwest through Montana to Texas. It may not make sense to stop in Montana at this time; however, loading commodities in Montana could be a long-term possibility.

Public Comment

An opportunity for public comments was provided; no comments were received.

Next Meeting

The subcommittee agreed to hold a half-hour teleconference in February. Vandembosch will poll members about potential dates.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3 p.m.