



Terry Finn
Director, Government Affairs

BNSF Railway Company
2454 Occidental Ave. South, Bldg. 1A
Seattle, WA 98134-1451

tel 206.625.6135
fax 206.625.6125
email terry.finn@bnsf.com

April 5, 2012

Ms. Sally Clark, President
Seattle City Council
P.O. Box 34025
Seattle, WA 98124-4025

Dear President Clark:

I write to express BNSF Railway's general support for returning an NBA team and bringing a new NHL presence to the Seattle area but also to join the Port of Seattle, the Mariners, Manufacturers Industrial Council and a growing list of businesses concerned about the proposed SODO location of a new arena and the likely result of growing traffic congestion and interference in maritime trade. Any discussion of potential adverse impacts of a new arena appears to have been lost amid the understandable enthusiasm for enhancing the professional sports scene. We ask the council to make a serious examination of these issues before taking further action.

We followed the recent deliberations of the Arena Advisory Panel and were disappointed to find its scope limited to examination of the scant financial elements of the proposal with little attention to very large issues of traffic, parking deficits, freight mobility or potential effects on the Port's international trade functions. In short, the Panel appears to have approved moving forward toward a city-county memorandum of understanding with the developer for use in team negotiations and for "pre-development" work before any serious consideration is given to whether the proposed SODO location is really appropriate.

BNSF believes a much more focused look at traffic and parking impacts as well as the job and economic benefits of our industrial maritime area must be carefully weighed before the city takes any action toward approval of the current arena proposal. We believe that other locations should be studied and pursued before bringing additional vehicular and pedestrian traffic into a largely industrial area that supports some of the highest-paying jobs in the region and is a foundation of Seattle's competitiveness in international trade.

Issues of traffic, parking, overlapping sports schedules and sensitivity of the international trade apparatus to rising costs and congestion already have been detailed in other letters of concern submitted to the advisory panel. BNSF has invested hundreds of millions of dollars in railroad infrastructure over the years to serve port terminals and hundreds of businesses, including the Boeing Co., and many other industries. Our \$50 million investment in a redesigned rail configuration and "emissionless" electric gantry cranes in our Seattle International Gateway



Arena Advisory Committee, Page 2

Yard already is being eroded by vehicle back-ups and truck idling caused by inadequate east-west traffic throughput. Past city promises to sustain or enhance freight capacity of streets passing along CenturyLink and Safeco fields were not fulfilled as originally planned, and, today, one has only to view the frequent lines of freight trucks along Atlantic street or south of Safeco along First Avenue to witness the impairment by increased sports and general traffic on the efficient workings of the waterfront. This is a trend that pre-dates but also has been aggravated by the Alaskan Way Viaduct replacement project.

Nearly 70 percent of the port's container business moves by rail to markets in the Midwest and East. Speedy and reliable rail service is critical to the state's success and is one of the reasons, in addition to the Boeing Co., that Washington leads the nation in per capita income from international trade. We believe that any economic assessment would show that business and tax revenues to local and state coffers from the activity of just one busy port terminal exceed that of all present or anticipated professional sports teams in Seattle.

No one, of course, intends any damage to this maritime trade system, but we also understand the popularity of professional sports and its impact on fans, families and voters. We would love to have the NBA back; hockey, too. However, the offer of a purchased site in SODO does not necessarily balance the existing deficits in traffic and parking capacity or the potential harm to the city's trading status. We believe it is likely to make things worse. Early enthusiasm has failed to weigh any of these concerns or to acknowledge that they find no mention in the current proposal. The cost of mitigating traffic, congestion and terminal access issues could far exceed the advertised cost of constructing the arena itself.

We at BNSF Railway look forward to thoughtful discussion about potential arena locations and about the importance of the SODO area to industrial and maritime economies and to major job production for Seattle and the state. Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Perry Simon".

Executive Director, Government Affairs

c: City Council Members
Port of Seattle
Seattle Mariners
Local 19, ILWU
Manufacturers Industrial Council