

From: [Oliver Orjiako](#)
To: [Jeffrey Delapena](#)
Cc: [Christine Cook](#)
Subject: FW: Chelatchie Prairie Railroad use is needed to address critical safety hazards
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 11:47:35 AM

Hello Jeff:

Please, for the index of record. Thank you.

From: Clark County Citizens United, Inc. <cccuinc@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, August 16, 2024 11:43 AM
To: Gary Medvigy <Gary.Medvigy@clark.wa.gov>; Karen Bowerman <Karen.Bowerman@clark.wa.gov>; Michelle Belkot <Michelle.Belkot@clark.wa.gov>; Glen Yung <Glen.Yung@clark.wa.gov>; Sue Marshall <Sue.Marshall@clark.wa.gov>; Kathleen Otto <Kathleen.Otto@clark.wa.gov>; Oliver Orjiako <Oliver.Orjiako@clark.wa.gov>; Jose Alvarez <Jose.Alvarez@clark.wa.gov>; CommDev OA Land Use <CommDevOALandUse@clark.wa.gov>; Brent Davis <Brent.Davis@clark.wa.gov>
Subject: Re: Chelatchie Prairie Railroad use is needed to address critical safety hazards

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Clark County Council
P.O.Box 5000
Vancouver, Washinton 98666

August 16, 2024

FOR THE PUBLIC RECORD AND THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Re: Chelatchie Prairie Railroad use is needed to address critical safety hazards

Dear Councilors,

My husband almost lost his life yesterday morning at the bottom of Kelly Hill. There is a critical safety need to allow the Chelatchie Prairie Railroad to proceed with plans to make it a working railroad that can transport rock from the proposed Chelatchie Prairie aggregate mine, and other mines in North Clark County. Delay in doing so is a fatal mistake.

He was stopped behind another car at the stop sign where Kelly Road intersects Rock Creek/Lucia Falls Road. He saw in his rear view mirror, a rock loaded dump truck, going too fast down this steep county road. My husband had nowhere to go, except off to the right of the car ahead of him into the gravel ditch, which just happened to be there. He was now alongside the other car, in the ditch. The driver of the truck was sounding his horn and because my husband had moved, was able to swerve and finally stop the truck in the other lane and gravel ditch. He just missed

going across Rock Creek/Lucia Falls Road, and over the embankment. Thankfully, there were no other cars involved, but there certainly would have been a death, if there had been. My husband would have been hit by the truck and pushed into the car in front of him, with a life threatening result.

(As I write this, I hear a loaded dump truck using his jake brakes as he goes down the same hill. We hear that sound all day long. One day I counted 16 double trucks, back to back between 299th Street and the Lewisville Highway SR 503, heading toward the Kelly Hill mine.)

These events are happening, over and over again, because of poor planning. County staff is more concerned over the welfare of an Oak tree, than the lives of the people. The Councilors and the Staff are charged with only one thing, the health and welfare of the public. The volume of truck activity from the Kelly Hill mine should have never been approved. The commissioners ignored the obvious and rejected the hearing examiner's recommendations. Now, the lives of those who have historically lived around Kelly Hill, before the mine existed, have been ruined. Those double loaded dump trucks are a major safety hazard. Friends of Clark County was silent, when this mine was approved.

Now there is an opportunity to get those trucks off our narrow, winding rural roads, and onto train cars that go directly to a destination, safely, in their own dedicated easement. A working railroad is multifaceted and can serve a multitude of uses. Heavy trucks are known to damage the road infrastructure far greater than car traffic. Kelly Road has already been rebuilt once, to serve those heavy trucks. SR 503 is breaking up from the heavy truck use. Isn't it time to find a better, more appropriate source of aggregate, that doesn't have such a financial and safety burden on our citizens?

Allowing the Chelatchie Prairie mine and the use of the railroad to proceed makes perfect sense and is long overdue. But now Friends of Clark County is front and center with volumes of testimony against the Chelatchie Prairie mine proposal and the use of the railroad. One must ask why is one mine, with the ability to protect the public, singled out as bad, when a previous, dangerous mine was ignored?

Clark County staff had full knowledge of the advantages of the use of the railroad to serve a superior aggregate mine in Chelatchie Prairie. But they looked the other way and is now rejecting both of them. Insubordination is a legitimate reason for termination of employment. It is clear, this Council supports the use of the railroad and proposed Chelatchie Prairie mine. Staff must make it happen as soon as possible, before my husband gets into the same situation, where he won't be so lucky.

Sincerely,

Carol Levanen, Exec. Secretary

Clark County Citizens United, Inc.

P.O. Box 2188
Battle Ground, Washington 98604