

CARD #07 EMERGING ECONOMIC CONCERNS

- Key route disruptions
- Inefficient Fraser Port connections
- Loss of Port popularity
- Sumas Route closure

DETAIL SCRIPT FOR #07 EMERGING ECONOMIC CONCERNS

Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway [BNSF] is North America's second largest rail company and has major presence in the Pacific Northwest. The unique routes of the BNSF, allow for the movement of rail freight between the continental USA and Canada's Lower Mainland [LM]. At present, the BNSF Peninsula corridor route allows BNSF's customers to access all ports on the Pacific NW including: Portland, Seattle, Tacoma, and the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority Delta-port. BNSF has recently increased their investment in the areas south of the border, including 4 miles of siding or double track to facilitate more efficient movements. See Ref #4 for more details including information regarding impacts and detriments of having this key route disrupted from one or more of the stated safety concerns and/or disasters.

Roberts Banks Delta-port established in 1966 became a major catalyst for increases in rail traffic along the BNSF coast route. Card #2 provides additional data. We continue to work to obtain additional data and hope to represent the past 50 years graphically. Today, Delta-port II is moving ahead with its future plans; see Delta-port link here. The present coastal route is subject to disruptions [as above]. These disruptions are projected to become more damaging as future rail growth increases. A move of this BNSF rail line inland [likely to highway 99 ROW] will save 30 minutes travel time. Considering the value of freight travelling this line [15 to 20 trains daily and up to 140 cars], the savings to BNSF, Port Metro, and the overall LM economy, will be immense; estimates of savings are outlined in card #18.

It is apparent from multiple media reports over past years, that competition between ports on the Pacific side of NA is intense. This competition is projected to rise as trade with Asia escalates. If occupants of the LM do not evolve with their surroundings, or strive to improve efficiencies [such as the rail relocation], it may result in Port Metro falling behind other ports. This potential reality is a subject that requires the continuing attention of all stakeholders on the Lower Mainland.

We comment now on discussions surrounding the Sumas-Huntington route. Although these discussions are not currently public, we are advised by our transportation consultant that there have been no definitive decisions in regard to this route. We are further advised that use of the Sumas line has been restricted to the interchange of cars with the CP and the Southern Railway [SRY] at Huntington, BC. While it is known that the line ends at the border, BNSF has claimed [not publically] that the line is unsuitable for a number of other reasons. BNSF has also disclosed that the line has been used only through agreement with SRY to reroute cars during track renewal. The Sumas line is a branch line and not a main line. If further information is acquired, it will be posted on this website. Please check back in the near future or sign up for newsletter communication.