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OEC endorses National Gateway project

Rail project requests federal stimulus funds to enable double-stacked rail cars, saving fuel and cutting air emissions

(Columbus, OH)—The Ohio Environmental Council today announced its support for the National Gateway project and its application for \$30 million in federal stimulus funds.

The project will enable double-stacked intermodal rail cars to connect ports in the mid-Atlantic with regions in the Midwest. To accomplish this, CSX Transportation and its partners are enlarging tunnel and bridge clearances in six different states and Washington, D.C. In Ohio, the project includes 16 clearance projects and a \$175 million new terminal for trans-loading truck trailers off and onto train cars in North Baltimore, Ohio (Wood County).

“This is a smart transportation investment with a big green bottom line. It will save energy, reduce greenhouse gases, and put more Ohioans to work. It’s right on the right track for a more environmentally sustainable economy,” said Jack Shaner, OEC Deputy Director. The OEC is supporting the National Gateway project because:

- Over a 30-year period, the project is projected to lower carbon dioxide emissions by more than 12 million tons, reduce fuel consumption by nearly 1 billion gallons, and reduce congestion on the highways.
- In Ohio, alone, the National Gateway project is estimated to move more than 1.7 billion highway freight miles to rail, yielding:
 - * 2.5 million tons of reduced carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions
 - * 1,000 tons of reduced nitrogen oxide (NO_x) emissions
 - * 600 tons of reduced particulate matter (PM) emissions
 - * 220 million gallons of saved fuel
- The new Northwest Ohio Intermodal Terminal in North Baltimore, Ohio, is projected to employ more than 200 people when fully operational in 2011 with 400 more jobs to be created during the construction phase. More than 2,600 direct and indirect jobs are projected to be created as a result of the facility over the next 10 years.

Ohio Governor Ted Strickland acknowledged the OEC’s support for the project, stating, “Support from environmental leaders like the Ohio Environmental Council show that the National Gateway is not only an investment in our transportation system, it’s an investment in our environment. Expanding the use of freight rail means a reduction in fuel consumption and less carbon emissions – and that means long-term benefits for the state and region.”

The OEC sent a letter today to Secretary Ray LaHood of the U.S. Department of Transportation in support of the project.

“Every ton of freight moved by rail instead of by truck means more energy savings, less greenhouse gases and other emissions, and more jobs and investment in Ohio and the Midwest. This is an investment that will help move Ohio and the nation in the right direction,” concluded Shaner.

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Read the OEC letter in support of the National Gateway project at http://www.theOEC.org/PDFs/PressReleases/12-3-09_Letter_GatewayProject.pdf.

The mission of the Ohio Environmental Council (OEC) is to secure healthy air, land, and water for all who call Ohio home. The OEC is Ohio’s leading advocate for fresh air, clean water, and sustainable land use. The OEC has a 40-year history of innovation, pragmatism, and success. Using legislative initiatives, legal action, scientific principles, and statewide partnerships, the OEC secures a healthier environment for Ohio’s families and communities. For more information, visit www.theOEC.org.