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## Congress of the United States House of Representatives

August 25, 2010

PETER A. DeFAZIO  
4TH DISTRICT, OREGON

TRANSPORTATION AND  
INFRASTRUCTURE

SUBCOMMITTEES:  
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AVIATION

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SUBCOMMITTEE:  
NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS, AND PUBLIC LANDS  
WATER AND POWER

Secretary Ray LaHood  
US Department of Transportation  
Washington DC

Dear Secretary LaHood:

I am concerned about the ExxonMobil Canada plan to use U.S. roadways to haul oversize loads to Alberta, Canada, for the Kearl Oil Sands project. At least 200 loads will be transferred from barges at the Port of Lewiston, Idaho, to trucks scheduled to travel two-lane highways in Idaho and Montana.


The Montana Department of Transportation (DOT) notes the ExxonMobil loads will be "over dimensional." The Montana DOT lists truck and trailer maximums for this project at 210 feet long, 24 feet wide, and 30 feet high. The total weight per load is estimated to be 493,892 pounds for light loads and 675,500 pounds for heavy loads. According to the Montana DOT, 78 percent of the loads will require a push tractor for additional power climbing and braking.

Kearl Oil Sands will provide economic benefits for ExxonMobil, Canada, and the Korean module manufacturer. Meanwhile, the oversized loads traveling U.S. roadways will degrade highway surfaces and subsurfaces, damage bridges and road shoulders, and dramatically increase maintenance and repair costs.

Federal tire and axle and load limits exist to ensure safe transport by trucks and to protect bridges and pavement. If Idaho and Montana issue oversize and overweight load permits in violation of the Federal Bridge Formula, American taxpayers will pay the price for the unprecedented wear and tear on our highway system. I am opposed to subsidizing ExxonMobil oil sands mining in Canada with taxpayer dollars.

I understand the transportation departments in Idaho and Montana have not yet issued the over-width and over-height load permits ExxonMobil needs, but work is already underway in both states to create oversized load corridors for commercial traffic. I urge you to investigate the permitting process in both states to ensure the impacts of oversized commercial traffic are not being underestimated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter DeFazio". The signature is stylized and cursive, with a prominent initial "P" and a long, sweeping underline.

PETER DeFAZIO  
Member of Congress

PAD:PJW