Motion in support of the Solutionary Rail Electrification proposal and a northern transcontinental corridor demonstration that includes routes between major cities in Washington

WHEREAS, coal and oil create climate disrupting carbon pollution and must be phased out, underscoring the need for new rail cargo markets;

WHEREAS, rail, unique among long-distance heavy transportation modes, can also replace its own oil fuel supply with electricity that can come from increasingly competitive renewable sources;

WHEREAS, rail line electrification can also be leveraged to build transmission lines that make presently remote solar and wind energy resources available in metropolitan markets;

WHEREAS, the Solutionary Rail strategy for rail electrification and modernization:
* reduces reliance on fossil fuel shipments, and reduces fossil fuel use by significantly shifting freight away from long-haul trucking and shifting passengers to a transport mode powered by renewable electricity,
* opens the way to reduce fossil-based electricity by substantially increasing renewable energy transmission and use, and
* creates a public-private partnership with railroads that can be the basis for improved working conditions for rail workers and renegotiation of track easements across tribal lands;

BE IT RESOLVED, Sierra Club Washington Chapter supports the Solutionary Rail proposal for a demonstration project of electrification on the Northern Transcontinental Corridor, and urges other Club Chapters to likewise support rail electrification leading to endorsement of renewable energy and electrified rail corridors by the Sierra Club. Furthermore, we call on Governor Inslee to direct the Washington State Department of Transportation and other appropriate state agencies to evaluate Solutionary Rail feasibility and to bring the general concept of rail corridor electrification, powered by renewable energy, into the set of sustainable transportation strategies for our transport system.

Adopted by Washington Chapter Executive Committee on May 24, 2017