STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2nd Session of the 45th Legislature (1996)

HOUSE CONCURRENT
RESOLUTION NO. 1074 By: Erwin

AS INTRODUCED

A Concurrent Resolution relating to the Valliant Depot; providing that the depot at Valliant, Oklahoma is important to local economy; recognizing that depot should be operational to protect public health and safety; requesting Texas, Oklahoma and Eastern Railroad to reconsider the closing of the depot at Valliant, Oklahoma; and directing distribution.

WHEREAS, the duties of the employees at the depot at Valliant, Oklahoma, operated by the Texas, Oklahoma and Eastern Railroad are necessary for the proper protection of the general public and the magnitude of work that is performed by the employees at this depot is justified and necessary to not only maintain a safe operating environment, but also to provide a quick and more efficient response time to a hazardous material spill; and

WHEREAS, the continued presence of the depot for the Texas, Oklahoma and Eastern Railroad will ensure the efficient operation of the business being conducted in conjunction with the Kiamichi Railroad, which supports the transportation needs of the Weyerhaeuser papermill facility in Valliant; and

WHEREAS, due to the distance from the customer service center at DeQueen, Arkansas, to the Weyerhaeuser papermill facility in Valliant, the specialized service needs necessary to the papermill will be impaired and hampered by not having on-site specialized railroad support; and

WHEREAS, the current work force of the depot supports the municipal, county, and state economy as a result of the depot being open twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week; and

WHEREAS, the location of this depot has been an asset to the local economy and the sudden loss of the support to the local economy would be devastating; and

WHEREAS, the size of the railyard, plus the number of movements necessary to properly service the Weyerhaeuser papermill facility in Valliant do not allow enough time for the trainmen to safely and efficiently perform their tasks, with the added duties forced upon them by the closure of the depot, and the cutback of trained personnel previously performing the clerical duties at this station prior to moving the clerical personnel to Arkansas; and

WHEREAS, the cutbacks have caused delayed response for service, lost shipments of commodity-laden rail cars, dangerous railyard conditions, unawareness of location of other railroad equipment from connecting railroads, poor communications, and the inability to coordinate the railyard movements for all traffic at this location; and

WHEREAS, unlike other locations, the depot in Valliant interchanges with the Kiamichi Railroad and is the starting and finishing point of the Texas, Oklahoma and Eastern division of the DeQueen and Eastern Texas, Oklahoma and Eastern Railroad with over two hundred rail cars per day coming in and going out of this station, as well as twenty-four-hour service to the Weyerhaeuser papermill facility in Valliant; and

WHEREAS, the Texas, Oklahoma and Eastern Railroad has the duty to operate safely and efficiently and it is imperative that personnel be on site to perform such safe and efficient operations; and

WHEREAS, the Texas, Oklahoma and Eastern Railroad has shown sufficient profits under its current operation and has failed to

identify any competition. The cost saving measures by moving personnel to Arkansas are merely to enhance profits and place an unnecessary hardship and increase in safety concerns on their employees and the safety of the general public; and

WHEREAS, the Texas, Oklahoma and Eastern Railroad has not proposed a rate increase in a number of years and has operated on the premise that any loss incurred was acceptable as long as it impacted positively on the bottom line of the papermill; and

WHEREAS, the proposed cuts by the Texas, Oklahoma and Eastern Railroad are generated by nothing more than a desire for additional profits.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE 2ND SESSION OF THE 45TH OKLAHOMA LEGISLATURE, THE SENATE CONCURRING THEREIN:

That the Oklahoma Legislature recognizes the importance of the train depot at Valliant to the people of this state and to the economy of Southeastern Oklahoma, especially to the people of Valliant, Oklahoma.

That because the public health and safety of this state are of utmost importance, including the health and safety of individuals in and around the Valliant depot, the Legislature recognizes a need to keep the depot operational and fully staffed.

That the Texas, Oklahoma and Eastern Railroad should reconsider the closure of the depot at Valliant, Oklahoma.

That copies of this resolution be distributed to the Texas, Oklahoma and Eastern Railroad, the Weyerhaeuser Company, the Kiamichi Railroad, and the mayor and governing body of Valliant, Oklahoma.

45-2-9543 JAF