

Washington State Department of Transportation

*Refrigerated Equipment Services*

Request for Information (RFI)

RFI-2016-0330

Release Date: *March 30, 2016*

**Due Date and Time**

*May, 2 2016 4:00 PM PST*

The RFI Coordinator is the **SOLE POINT OF CONTACT** at WSDOT for this procurement. All communication between the bidding Proposers and WSDOT shall be with the RFI Coordinator.

Tim Carroll, RFI Coordinator

Phone: 360-705-7595

Email: [carrolt@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:carrolt@wsdot.wa.gov)

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# REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI) 2016-0330

## Refrigerated Equipment Services

### 1 Introduction

#### Background on the Produce Rail Car Program

The Produce Rail Car Program was started as a result of the state of Washington receiving \$2 million in federal grant funding in 2004 and 2005. The Washington State Legislature also provided \$40,000 in funding for the program. The program was created to assist the agricultural community by providing refrigerated rail cars that carry Washington-grown produce to east coast markets. Previously, there had been a critical shortage of refrigerated rail cars and given Washington State's geography; it was difficult for shippers to gain access to this rail equipment.

In 2010 a new program called The Cold Train was introduced as a dedicated refrigerated container service that operated in conjunction with BNSF Railway. This service, which was operated by a private company, offered a three (3)-day rail service between Washington State and Chicago, IL. Due to the success of this program and others like it, the Produce Rail Car Program declined and WSDOT did not renew its agreement with the operator of the Produce Rail Car Program in 2012.

In March 2014, BNSF discontinued the 3-day service that The Cold Train relied upon. The Cold Train continued servicing customers with a slower rail service, but was terminated altogether in August 2014. Since that time, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) has consulted with farmers, shippers and short line railroads, mainline railroads and port districts to determine if interest is present to reinstate the Produce Rail Car program.

#### How did the Produce Rail Car Program operate?

The Produce Rail Car Program was modeled after the successful Washington Grain Train program, which supplies grain cars to the state's wheat and barley growers. WSDOT entered into contact with Rail Logistics to lease 25 refrigerated rail cars. Shipper would contact Rail Logistics to order rail cars and would be responsible for transport costs including fuel.

#### Current Produce Rail Car Program Request-for-Proposal

The Washington State Department of Transportation has recently been granted an extension of federal funding for the Produce Railcar Program. The program has funding in the amount of \$466,471 remaining in the program.

**This Request for Information (RFI) is being released to solicit information to identify if any existing or new programs designed to provide temperature controlled equipment and services could be created or expanded to provide the benefits of rail transportation to Washington State's produce growers and shippers.**

*Responses submitted to WSDOT by Vendor should include the following considerations:*

- *A detailed description of the existing or proposed program including:*

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- *How the program is/would be funded?*
- *What operational characteristics are proposed (including proposed origin and destinations, markets served, frequency and speed of service and any preference given to product or commodity)*
- *What type of equipment would be used and who do you propose would own the equipment (i.e. Do you propose a program where the state owns the equipment and you manage the program, or do you also own equipment or lease equipment as well?)*
- *What specific programmatic costs would be offset or covered by the available grant funding?*
- *How would you identify and interact with shippers and customers using the program?*
- *What partnerships are crucial to the success of the proposed program?*
- *Does your program (actual or as proposed) have a stream of revenue from use of the equipment as well? If so, how would you spend or redeploy any revenue earned?*

*Proposed programmatic solutions should provide additional details such as:*

- *Limited grant funding is available(only \$466,471 in grant funding remains available). How does the programmatic solution propose to use this limited funding to develop a sustainable program that can thrive when available funds have been expended?*
- *Existing rail car programs are serving Washington State produce shippers. Does your response fill a void not currently being met by other programs? Does it expand an existing program? Please explain.*
- *Would your organization provide additional funding to ensure the program is successful? Please describe what the funding would be used for?*

Responses submitted should include the following criteria:

- *Provide a response that addresses all of the relevant bullet points included in the above section.*
- *When possible, include any actual examples of existing programs managed elsewhere.*
- *Vendors are encouraged to describe to what extent they can meet or exceed these requirements.*

Vendors are encouraged to provide pricing for all *refrigerated equipment services* offered in their response. *Vendors are also encouraged to provide for an integrated solution or an integrated multi-vendor solution under one prime vendor's proposal.*

For the purposes of this RFI, Eligible Vendors may be defined as one of the following: a Class I or mainline railroad, a short line railroad or any combination thereof; a company which owns railcars and/or provides refrigerated railcars for lease; a third-party logistics company or a company which provides storage space or services and/or transportation services for refrigerated and/or frozen products; a company demonstrating capability to enter into and compete in any of the above business lines.

## **2 Request For Information Process**

After a review of the Request for Information (RFI) responses and assessment of the marketplace, the Washington State Department of Transportation may or may not choose to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for *refrigerated equipment services*.

Participation in the RFI process is not a requirement for any subsequent competitive procurement, although the results of this RFI may be used to build and refine an RFP.

WSDOT reserves the right to refrain from issuing an RFP or any other formal solicitation document for this product. This RFI is not a formal solicitation and no contract will be awarded as a result.

## 2.1 RFI Schedule

Release RFI	<i>March 30, 2016</i>
Vendor Questions Due by 4:00 PM, PST*	<i>April 8, 2016</i>
Responses to Vendor Questions	<i>April 15, 2016</i>
Vendor Submissions Due by 4:00 PM, PST*	<i>May 2, 2016</i>

\*Pacific Standard Time

WSDOT reserves the right to revise the above timeline.

## 3 Administrative Requirements

### 3.1 RFI Coordinator

Vendor communications concerning this RFI should be directed to the RFI Coordinator listed below.

<b>RFI Coordinator</b>	<i>Tim Carroll</i>
<b>Address</b>	Washington State Department of Transportation Administrative Services Contracts Office P.O. Box 47408 Olympia, WA 98504-7408
<b>Phone</b>	(360) 705-7595
<b>E-mail</b>	<i>carrolt@wsdot.wa.gov@wsdot.wa.gov</i>

### 3.2 Response Preparation Instructions

WSDOT requests that vendors respond with any preprinted materials that would provide the information requested.

Vendors are to provide responses in an electronic format such as Adobe Acrobat or Microsoft Word. **All communications must reference the RFI acquisition number -RFI 2015 0827 in the subject or title area.** This will assist in our review process.

Responses to this RFI should be submitted to the RFI Coordinator no later than 4:00 p.m. *May 2, 2016*, Pacific Standard Time (PST), as appropriate. Please do not cut and paste your responses into this RFI. Instead, provide your response as a separate document and include numbers referencing the RFI section to which you are responding. Only one electronic copy need be submitted.



Participation in the RFI process is not a requirement for any subsequent competitive procurement, although the results of this RFI may be used to build and refine an RFQQ / RFP. WSTC reserves the right to refrain from issuing an RFQQ or any other formal solicitation document for this product. This RFI is not a formal solicitation and no contract will be awarded as a result.

WSDOT requests that Vendors respond with any preprinted materials that would provide the information requested in Appendices: A and B.

Vendors are to provide responses in an electronic format such as Adobe Acrobat or Microsoft Word. All communications must reference the RFI acquisition number RFI 2016 0330. This will assist in our review process.

Responses to this RFI should be submitted to the RFI Coordinator via e-mail no later than 4:00 p.m. May 2, 2016, Pacific Time (PT). Only one electronic copy needs to be submitted.

Please submit responses to the RFI Coordinator. The RFI Coordinator may email an acknowledgement of receipt to the submitting Vendor.

### **3.3 Cost of Response Preparation**

Vendors will not be reimbursed for costs associated with preparing or presenting any response to this RFI.

### **3.4 Response Property of WSDOT**

All materials submitted in proposal to this RFI become the property of the WSDOT. WSDOT has the right to use any of the ideas presented in any proposal to the RFI. Selection or rejection of a proposal does not affect this right.

### **3.5 Public Records and Proprietary Information**

Any information contained in the response that is proprietary or confidential must be clearly designated. Marking of the entire submission as proprietary or confidential will be rejected as non-responsive.

To the extent consistent with chapter 42.56 RCW, the Public Disclosure Act, WSDOT shall maintain the confidentiality of Vendor's information marked confidential or proprietary. If a request is made to view Vendor's proprietary information, WSDOT will notify Vendor of the request and of the date that the records will be released to the requester unless Vendor obtains a court order enjoining that disclosure. If Vendor fails to obtain the court order enjoining disclosure, WSDOT will release the requested information on the date specified.

WSDOT's sole responsibility shall be limited to maintaining the above data in a secure area and to notify Vendor of any request(s) for disclosure for so long as WSDOT retains Vendor's information in WSDOT records per state law. Failure to so label such materials or failure to

timely respond after notice of request for public disclosure has been given shall be deemed a waiver by Vendor of any claim that such materials are exempt from disclosure.

### **3.6 Vendor Comments and Questions**

Vendors may submit comments and questions to the RFI Coordinator prior to responding to the RFI by the date indicated in the RFI schedule in Section 2.1. Responses to vendor questions will be considered addendums to the RFI. Modifications to the RFI that may result from Vendor comments will be sent to all Vendors. Where there appears to be a conflict between the RFI and any amendment or addenda issued, the last amendment or addendum issued will prevail.

- 3.7 By submitting a response to this RFI, Vendor representative information will be placed on the interested parties list for any competitive solicitation that might be developed from this RFI. If you prefer not to be added to this list please say so in your response.



## **Appendix A – Vendor and Product Overview**

- 1. Vendor Name: (what is the name of your company?)**
  
- 2. Vendor Contact Information: (how can we contact you – phone, email, postal and mail)**
  
- 3. Brief Product Overview: (tell us about your product and how it is utilized.)**

## **Appendix B - Vendor's Recommendations**

- 1. Given your knowledge of our current informational needs, past Produce Rail Car Program, and the information provided about WSDOT's requirements and WSTC's general public survey work, what would your company recommend and why?**

**Responses submitted to WSDOT by Vendor should include the following considerations:**

- 2. A detailed description of the existing or proposed program including:**
  - a. How the program is/would be funded?**
  
  - b. What operational characteristics are proposed (including proposed origin and destinations, markets served, frequency and speed of service and any preference given to product or commodity?)**
  
  - c. What type of equipment would be used and who do you propose would own the equipment (i.e. Do you propose a program where the state owns the equipment and you manage the program, or do you also own equipment or lease equipment as well?)**
  
  - d. What specific programmatic costs would be offset or covered by the available grant funding?**
  
  - e. How would you identify and interact with shippers and customers using the program?**
  
  - f. What partnerships are crucial to the success of the proposed program?**
  
  - g. Does your program (actual or as proposed) have a stream of revenue from use of the equipment as well? If so, how would you spend or redeploy any revenue earned?**