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July 16, 2020
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Ms. Cynthia T. Brown
Chief, Section of Administration
Office of Proceedings
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Re: *Seven County Infrastructure Coalition – Construction and Operation – in Utah, Carbon, Duchesne, and Uintah Counties, UT, STB Docket No. FD 36284*

Dear Ms. Brown:

Since retiring in 1997 after a 40-year career as a national park planner, I have been a property owner and resident within a small subdivision north of Buena Vista in Chaffee County Colorado bordered by the currently inactive Union Pacific Railroad line. Coincidentally I am also much involved here as a volunteer in recreation management on the 85% of our county that is federal public lands. I was formerly active in establishing and planning the local state-designated Collegiate Peaks Scenic and Historic Byway. That Byway runs the south-north length of our county in essentially the same corridor as the UP line. I also happen to have been the primary developer and planner behind the long-distance hiking/biking and driving "Stage and Rail" trail project identified as one of Colorado's top 16 trail priorities for implementation. For much of its length this 70-mile route is within a few hundred yards of the inactive line, and when fully developed would sometimes lie within the RR right of way and even cross it at several locations. And though not an active participant in its development, I am familiar with the strongly publicly supported 1990 era proposal to establish a formal Rail To Trails project that was nearing successful completion when UP's initial plan to formally abandon the line was dropped when the Surface Transportation Board denied its request to be allowed to do so.

With this perspective I have a solid appreciation of the importance of recreation in the quality of life of local residents and its attractiveness to visitors from beyond our county borders. Beyond quality of life the recreational opportunities here are a predominant driver of the local economy. Preservation and sustainable management of our local recreational resources has long been of concern to the citizenry as well as local elected officials, but in the past 4-5 years this has developed into a serious organized community driven effort to act. Recreational resources and their condition are being systematically identified and quantified and baselines established by which to measure change; physical interventions to reduce resource damage are being taken. In short, local citizens are committed to sustainable growth and management of recreational resources as key to long term physical, mental and economic health of our communities.

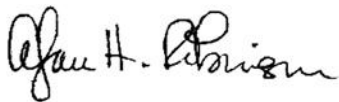
I don't wish to overstate the case, but resumption of active rail service would have a substantial negative impact on our county while, at least as it would appear from present plans, bringing little to no positive benefits. Of key importance is that by virtue of its north-south orientation, almost all of it within

a few hundred yards of the Arkansas River, it provides a substantial physical – and legal – barrier to crossing over into and accessing public lands, including accessing the Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area itself (a state park with nearly the highest visitation figures in the state). As demand for access to public lands has increased, whether for backcountry areas or simply for access to the Gold Medal fishery or rafting in the Arkansas, it has always been extremely challenging to obtain crossing access permission from the UP (even during these 2 ½ decades of inactivity). It seems obvious that if 3-10 trains a day are passing through, barriers to access across or even to share use of the ROW will increase to prohibitive levels. Safety issues will proliferate, and the visitor experience of rafters, kayakers, fishermen and hikers will be degraded especially where the RR tracks parallel and skirt the edges of the Arkansas. This would especially be true where the line passes through the new Browns Canyon National Monument for perhaps a dozen miles, where access to the entire interior of the Monument east of the RR would be rendered significantly compromised.

Property owners such as I along the ROW will face issues of all-hours noise and potential loss in property value. Although obviously rail operation safety has improved considerably since the Denver and Rio Grand initially began its operation on this line in 1881, its worth pointing out during that early period there were dozens of minor and major rail accidents which ended with cars and freight actually in the river. The environmental damage and revenue reduction potential for a serious derailment of dozens of cars carrying coal or liquified fuels into the Arkansas is an extremely serious outcome to consider. The list of negatives is not, in my view, offset by potential local benefits: trains will essentially be passing through the county at maximum safe speeds, not pausing in any of our small communities to pick up freight or passengers for a positive revenue impact, and causing delays at local at-grade crossings which would be a substantial irritant during peak season visitation.

Although I submit there are other significant arguments in opposition to your granting this requested action, I am here drawing your attention to one of vital importance to our local communities and economies which might get lost in deeper discussions of profit motives and national transportation policies.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alan H. Robinson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Alan" and last name "Robinson" clearly distinguishable.

Alan Robinson

Retired National Park and Tourism Planner

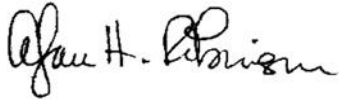
Volunteer in recreation management

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that I have, on July 16, 2020, served copies of this Petition for Reconsideration on all parties of record in this proceeding.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alan H. Robinson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alan H. Robinson

A private individual, representing himself