

Cynthia Brown

Chief, Section of Administration Surface Transportation Board Office of Proceedings 395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423

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Re: Docket No. 36471 Rio Grande Pacific Corporation-Continuance In Control Exemption- Colorado Midland & Pacific Railway Company

Dear Ms. Brown:

First and foremost, I have serious environmental and quality of life concerns with this project and I believe an exemption is inappropriate at this time. I have lived in Chaffee County since 2010. This is a mountain community in which protected lands are the life blood of the economy. The Arkansas River, once polluted from mining in Leadville, has been cleaned up and is now a Gold Medal Trout River and the most rafted river in the state. The train with oil cars carrying crude oil from Utah will travel track that hugs the river from Canon City to Leadville. Tourism is the lifeblood of the valley and people come for the pristine water, mountains and natural lands on both sides of the river. People buy homes here because they want access to this lovely area. The river from Leadville to Parkdale is a recreation mecca for boating and fishing. From Leadville to Parkdale there are at least 5 separate herds of bighorn sheep that spend a substantial time near and adjacent to the railroad tracks. One of the most popular access sites to the river and Browns Canyon National Monument, Ruby Mountain, requires a train crossing. The train would then pass the Ruby Mt. Campground so close it would wake up sleeping campers. Any oil spills would not only have an immediate impact on the river and local wildlife but would seriously harm the economy of the entire valley and the river all the way to Pueblo, Colorado.

The trains will have a very specific effect on the people that live in and near the town of Buena Vista. Buena Vista has grown significantly since the trains last ran through town. There are 3 train crossings within town and the tracks run adjacent to the joint middle and high school. Moving the tracks to the west would be impossible. The trains create major traffic and safety issues. It is conceivable that a train almost 2 miles long could be crossing all 3 tracks in the town at once, thus hampering emergency services from reaching fires, accidents, and other emergencies. When trains used to run here, fires occurred due to sparks from the trains, and the adjacent railroad environment has gotten even drier and more populated with homes. That could make a fire devastating to our community.

All of the above brings up the real issue. This filing is a Notice of Exemption. This transaction is controversial and not routine. It will significantly affect the quality of the human and natural environment. The potential for oil spills along the tracks would affect not only our community but all the communities downstream. Finally, CMP has not been quite truthful. They state there will be no change in service over Tennessee Pass. There has been no service for 24 years so clearly this is a change in service. Also, they state that revenues for operating the line will not exceed 5 million. This can hardly be the case since the cost for operating the line exceeds 5 million.

Due to these concerns, I believe an EIS should be required and because this request will have a negative effect on the natural and human environment the Notice of Exemption should be denied. What is needed is transparency and an exemption is just the opposite.

Respectfully,

Barbara Brady
Buena Vista Resident

Cc Parties of Record