

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

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Office of Proceedings
January 13, 2021
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Public Record

Re: Docket No. 36471
Colorado Midland & Pacific Railway Company

Dear Ms. Brown:

I urge you to reject the Notices of Exemption filed by the Colorado, Midland, and Pacific Railway Company to restart operations on the portion of rail line from Eagle to Canon City, Colorado. This rail line was abandoned in 1996, nearly 25 years ago, due to derailments and other difficulties and costs in operating trains in the mountains of Colorado. In the subsequent years, this area has come to support vibrant outdoor recreation and conservation that is dependent upon a clean, safe, and healthy environment, including clean air and water. Notably, Browns Canyon National Monument was designated to protect a portion of the Arkansas River, which the line runs through. I am very concerned that this proposal would open the door for dangerous oil train traffic in the Rocky Mountains. The parent company of Colorado, Midland, and Pacific has concurrently applied to build a new railroad in Utah to haul crude oil. Resuming rail operations would provide convenient access for oil to be shipped from Utah, through Colorado, and to the Gulf of Mexico region. The company seeking the exemptions claims there will be no environmental impacts associated with resuming operations of the rail line. This will lead to a myriad of very serious potential environmental impacts, such as:

- Air quality impacts, including impacts to adjacent Class I wilderness areas in the mountains of Colorado.
- Water quality impacts, particularly impacts from potential train derailments that could irreversibly contaminate headwater streams, the Colorado River, Eagle River, and Arkansas River.
- Impacts to the climate related to the burning of fossil fuels, including the processing and burning of any oil shipped from Utah.
- Impacts to protected lands, including Browns Canyon National Monument and other public lands in the area.
- Impacts to fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats, in particular imperiled species such as native cutthroat trout and Canada lynx.
- Impacts to communities and businesses that are now more dependent on the quality of the outdoors than ever.

The Notices of Exemption filed by the Colorado, Midland, and Pacific Railway Company are an attempt to sidestep environmental and public scrutiny. The proposal should be rejected.

Respectfully,

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CC: Parties of Record