

Cynthia Brown

Chief, Section of Administration Surface Transportation Board Office of Proceedings

395 E Street, SW

Washington, DC 20423

301473

RE: Docket No. FD 36471

Colorado Midland & Pacific Railway Company

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Office of Proceedings  
January 14, 2021  
Part of  
Public Record

Dear Ms. Brown,

We as a company have many concerns regarding the use of Tennessee Pass for railway traffic. We have been a rafting outfitter since 1978 and a majority of our staff have been with the company for 15+ years. Andy Neinas, the owner of Echo Canyon, is very active and dedicated to the industry as a whole, involved in the Colorado River Outfitters Association, Arkansas River Outfitters Association, Pikes Peak Country Area Attractions and Colorado Springs Convention and Visitors Bureau, just to name a few.

The time, effort, and money taken to make Brown's Canyon a National Monument in 2015 is not something that should be dismissed or taken lightly. Being designated as such backs the belief that this section has great historic and scientific interest. The potential environmental impact from a spill or derailment could be catastrophic. This is something that could happen through no fault of any company but rather from a rock slide or other natural occurrence. In the last 24 years the line has been dormant it has become a gathering place for herds of Bighorn Sheep along the river as well as habitat for many other native animals, both of which are now some of the attractions that make Browns Canyon one of the most popular sections of the Arkansas for outdoor recreation like boating, fishing, hiking, and camping. Being able to camp near the river while immersed in nature is one of the draws for that particular section. Arkansas Headwater Recreation Area, which manages six campgrounds along the river and rail line route, has invested well over a million dollars in just two of those campgrounds in the last ten years. Hecla Junction, one of those recently rebuilt campgrounds, is a very popular retreat. Some of the campsites there are less than 250ft from the tracks. That's less than a football field's length away!

Recreational tourism has been one of the fastest growing industries in Colorado, and the revenue that is brought in could see substantial drop if use of the tracks in this way moves forward. Those effects would then be felt by not only that area that is directly impacted, but those who benefit from the money brought in by it. This includes negative economic impact for local businesses that would see a reduction in income due to the noise and traffic jams that are caused by the train.

This transaction is controversial and will significantly affect the quality of life, environment, and conservation in the area. Using the line to transport dirty oil from Utah is the exact opposite of the direction we as Coloradoans are heading when it comes to conservation in our state. We believe that an EIS should be mandatory and that because of the potential negative impacts, that the Notice of Exemption should be denied.

Respectfully,

Tabitha Grooms

Echo Canyon River Expeditions

Cc: Karl Morell [karlm@karlmorell.com](mailto:karlm@karlmorell.com)

CC: Parties of Record