

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

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Public Record

RE: Docket No. FD 36471

As a Chaffee County, Colorado constituent and homeowner, I am contacting you to request that neither Colorado Midland & Pacific Railway or Colorado Pacific Railroad, or any other railroad companies, shall be allowed to restart service on the Tennessee Pass rail line.

I believe the transaction proposed by the Colorado Midland and Pacific Railway is neither “routine” nor “noncontroversial” and, therefore, does not qualify for an exemption from regulations. I believe statements in the CMP application are either false or misleading, which should disqualify the request for exemption.

Bringing back train activity would drastically change the Arkansas Valley for the worse, negatively impacting the Arkansas River Valley in many ways. Many have come to know and love this valley for its huge amount of public land, and the recreational assets that come with it. Many things have changed since the rail line went dormant in 1997. Most notably, the Arkansas River achieved Gold Medal Fishery status along a 102-mile stretch from Leadville, CO to Parkdale, CO. In 2015, the Browns Canyon National Monument was rightfully established, providing a critical wildlife habitat, including big game and bighorn sheep herds. Our communities have grown to embrace the new changes that the absence of the rail line has afforded us. The Arkansas River whitewater rafting industry now generates over 225,000 visitors annually, being the most highly guided river the country. We rely on the continued protection of our natural resources and river corridors, in order to maintain and grow the recreational tourism revenue so vital to our economy.

And as a 12 year resident of Chaffee County, I can assure you the prospect of a passenger line is neither alluring nor realistic. Our communities in the Arkansas River Valley (Leadville, Buena Vista, and Salida) are a mere 30 minutes from each other. Unless a passenger train could transport people between those communities faster and more affordably than a car can travel, it will provide no use to those of us who live here. And seeing as there will be hundreds if not thousands of freight cars a day also using the track, it will be impossible to provide passenger service that is convenient.

The current plan to have tax payers to pay for repairs, under the guise of a passenger train, so a millionaire can line his pockets is not a sustainable long term plan. The CMP claims its revenues from operating the rail line would not exceed \$5 million per year, a limit beyond which the railway would be subject to additional regulation. Since operating costs alone would exceed \$5 million per year, I believe CMP’s projected revenues are intentionally underestimated to avoid appropriate scrutiny and regulation.

Please help to ensure our communities don’t suffer from this short sighted, impulsive and greedy plan that at its heart has nothing to do with providing benefits for our mountain communities, and everything to do with making a rich man more money.

Respectfully,

Benjamin Hanus

Chaffee County Resident

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CC: Parties of Record