

EI-30040

According to the Sierra Club, he proposed Uinta Basin Railway oil train would increase production of oil from the Uinta Basin by between 225,000 and 350,000 barrels of oil per day. In a region that currently only produces around 80,000 barrels per day, this would represent a quadrupling of oil extraction, which would have dire consequences for air quality, public lands, water, and global warming.

As a Utahn who is incredulous that this kind of development is still being proposed as the deterioration of our natural environment accelerates, the concerns of the Sierra Club are my concerns, as well:

Air pollution in the Uinta Basin has already reached dangerous levels due to oil and gas development. By quadrupling oil extraction in the region, the railway would exacerbate this problem, resulting in more asthma attacks and other harmful conditions that can lead to premature death.

The extraction and combustion of four times as much oil from the Uinta Basin would threaten our ability to avoid the most disastrous effects of climate change by staying under 1.5°C warming.

Fossil fuel development requires large amounts of water. At a time when water security for the region is more tenuous than ever, increased oil development unleashed by the Uinta Basin Railway would threaten the region's water supply.

The new development needed to create a fourfold increase in oil development in the Uinta Basin will result in major impacts to the region's landscapes, including on public lands.

New oil train traffic will create increased inconvenience, air pollution, and risk of derailment in the communities through which the trains travel.

If the railway is constructed, but recoverable oil reserves in the Uinta Basin are exhausted before it is paid off, taxpayers could be left to cover the cost.

To date, there has been very little information about the Uinta Basin Railway provided to the public and little opportunity for public participation. The uncertainty around many details of the project is concerning and should be resolved before the project moves forward.

Committing funds to constructing the Uinta Basin Railway is precluding efforts to transition away from boom-and-bust fossil fuel economies—which are susceptible to volatile global markets—and towards more stable, local, clean, sustainable, and just economies.

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Comment: Air pollution in the Uinta Basin has already reached dangerous levels due to oil and gas development. By quadrupling oil extraction in the region, the Uinta Basin Railway would exacerbate this problem, resulting in more asthma attacks and other harmful conditions that can lead to premature death. Utahns deserve a healthy and viable future, and the Uinta Basin Railway is positioned to jeopardize that vision.