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Commenter: Irene Hansen

Organization:

State: Utah

Agency: STB

Initiative: Uinta Basin Railway EIS

Attachments: No Attachments

Submission Text

January 17, 2021

Joshua Wayland

Surface Transportation Board

c/o ICF

9300 Lee Highway

Fairfax, VA 22031

Environmental Filing Docket # FD 36284

Dear Mr. Wayland,

I have had the pleasure of providing the leadership for economic development in Duchesne County for over 20 years. I have worked with business leaders, elected officials, investors, developers and entrepreneurs.

During this time I have observed time and time again the limitations of trying to diversify the economy in Northeastern Utah. Our region is the largest geographic area not served by a rail or interstate highway in the United States. This reality has left us with a fragile economy and a struggle to build sustainable communities. However in spite of our struggles our leaders have built a region dedicated to its residents and showing a willingness to turn every opportunity into a challenge that has been accepted. Our residents work so very hard, taking care of their neighbors and families.

Currently we have a once in a lifetime opportunity to finally turn the tide by leveling out the ups and downs of depending on one industry. I have waited with great anticipation for the release of the Draft EIS for the Uinta Rail Project.

- The DEIS estimates that the preferred alternative, Whitmore Park, would create approximately 3,000 construction jobs; \$209,700,000 in direct, indirect, and induced labor income; and \$311,800,000 in direct, indirect, and induced value added (page 3.13-26).

In a community that experienced double digit unemployment in mid-2014 through 2016 the construction jobs that may range in the 2,000-3,000 with a value of approximately \$210,000,000 direct economic impact and induced labor income means that local contractors can put local residents, local tribal members and out of work construction workers in neighboring counties to work; local employees then spend money in retail, auto and home improvement of new construction generates sales tax revenue, centrally assessed tax revenue and allows rural communities to upgrade infrastructure and for a diversified economic landscape that comes with railroad infrastructure.

I sincerely hope that my letter will assist you in this very important decision. I remain supportive of all the efforts that have been made to bring this project to fruition. I remain appreciative of the process.

Sincerely Irene Hansen

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