



August 12, 2021

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The Honorable Martin J. Oberman
Chairman
U.S. Surface Transportation Board
395 E St., SW
Washington, D.C. 20423

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Dear Chairman Oberman,

As the Surface Transportation Board's Office of Environmental Analysis has released its Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Uinta Basin Railway (STB Docket No. FD 36284), we want to express our continued support for this critically important infrastructure project. The construction of the Uinta Basin Railway will bring tremendous economic opportunities to a long-underserved region of Utah while appropriately mitigating impacts on the surrounding environment.

As America recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic, innovative new transportation projects such as the Uinta Basin Railroad are more important than ever to support stable, high-paying jobs in rural communities. The Uinta Basin region is rich in natural resources including hydrocarbons, phosphates, and other minerals critical to America's economy – but the development of these resources has long been impaired by the lack of quality freight transportation infrastructure.

The socioeconomic benefits of the proposed railway go beyond the transport of hydrocarbons out of the Uinta Basin to national markets. The railway will help the Uinta Basin diversify its economy. Without rail, interstate highway, and major airport service, Duchesne and Uintah Counties are at a major competitive disadvantage when trying to attract business investment. According to a 2014 study by the Utah Department of Workforce Services, Duchesne and Uintah Counties had the least diversified economies of the 29 counties in Utah. The two counties rely on the oil and gas industry for a significant part of their jobs and income, which exposes the economy to the booms and busts of the industry. Construction of the railroad will put the Uintah Basin counties in a better position to attract other types of industries that require rail service.

To borrow a phrase from President Biden, the time is now to “build back better” by expanding our rail network and improving American lives by connecting rural communities to the global economy.

We appreciate the diligent work of the Office of Environmental Analysis on the Final Environmental Impact Statement and respectfully request that the Surface Transportation Board approve the proposed action submitted by the Seven County Infrastructure Coalition.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Spencer J. Cox".

Governor Spencer J. Cox
State of Utah

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Deidre M. Henderson".

Lieutenant Governor Deidre M. Henderson
State of Utah

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "J. Stuart Adams".

President J. Stuart Adams
Utah State Senate

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brad Wilson".

House Speaker Brad Wilson
Utah House of Representatives