

Sept. 10, 1998
2119 Butler
Miles City, MT
59301

Dear Sirs:

This letter is my formal objections to the filing of the Tongue River Railroad Company (TRRC) for 17.3 additional miles (STE Finance Docket #30186 sub-no.3) referred to as the "Western Alignment".

I, Paul Schmeling, am a resident of Miles City, Mt. and have been since 1978. I have been continuously employed by class 1 railroads since 1971, amounting to over 27 years of service. This speculative railroad, TRRC, should never have been allowed to add trackage to a non-existent railroad that still has not built anything for over fifteen years. This railroad should not be given the right of eminent domain for the purpose of creating a "short-cut" for coal traffic to the Mid-West. It should stand alone on the "basis for need" requirements of the law. Railroads nation wide would be able to condemn private and public property all over America simply because they want a short cut!? You are supposed to protect the citizens of this country FROM these types of schemes, not allow them to trample OVER us with your blessing! TRRC's manipulation of the ICC and the STE in order to gain this new route for the BNSF (previously Burlington Northern RR) should not be allowed to stand. The entire route from Miles City to Decker, MT. should stand alone on the requirements for all railroad permits. public need. BNSF has gained permission from TRRC to operate this entire line and has stated that ALL of their existing coal traffic to or from Wyoming and/or Decker, MT would be routed via this new route at start up! I taped the meeting at which BNSF vice-pres. Mr. T.G. Kraemer stated this.

The economic disaster from the loss of existing BNSF jobs at Forsyth, MT is not properly addressed in the environmental statement submitted, partially because the TRRC continues to maintain that they are creating jobs. The minimum loss at Forsyth would be 30% of existing train crew (operating) jobs, (approx. 20 employees) including myself, which would require me to move and displace another employee at a different location on BNSF. In Exhibit H pg.4-17 table 4-9, the job loss projections are inaccurate for two main reasons. No. 1 - the current traffic is much higher than shown. Current train traffic is seven trains per day each way, not 5.27 as shown. No. 2 - The comparison of all potential job needs for TRRC operation to only the operating department loss for BNSF employees is unfair. The table on page 4-16 purports only 38.4 train crew members (operating dept.) needed [note this is 18.4 employees higher than TRRC estimates in Sub no.2 Draft EIS pg. 4-14, table 4-6!!] and the table on pg 4-17 shows 87 train crew members displaced! This difference of 48.6 is much

higher than the seven (7) jobs lost claim on pg. 4-18 and is still short of actual loss due to higher traffic as stated previously. Fifty jobs lost times \$86,000 is \$4.3 million in direct wages alone in the operating department. Population changes (table 4-10) would be affected correspondingly (using their figures) at -125.

This latest filing (Exhibit H, pg.1-9, table 1-2) acknowledges that there would be little or insignificant traffic that originates on this proposed line for five years (note that in DEIS of Sub no.2, page 1-8, table 1-2 these mythical mines were to be producing 2 million tons of coal per year by 1995 or 1996, and 8 million tons by the year 2000!) and that most of the traffic is rerouted from BNSF. (exhibit D pg. 2, para 1, lines 4-14) (Also see application pg. 14, table 1) Traffic originating on TRRC is merely speculative, inaccurate (and quite lofty), and not supported by the economics of free enterprise. All the coal from Decker, MT and Spring Creek is currently handled by BNSF. There is no NEED for rerouting coal.

The original Finance Docket 30186 Sub no.1 no longer has any basis for need as this speculative permit for the mythical Monto mine is now defunct. This removes the basis for need for the original permit of 89 miles, which should be revoked. This permit also had a one year time limit that has been ignored. The last Finance Document 30186, sub no.2, has a 3-year limit on completion via the approved route, yet nothing has been started and only one year remains before completion is due. This permit should also be revoked for failure to meet these limits.

Sincerely,

Paul Schmeling
Paul Schmeling

*Notary Public for the State of Montana
Residing at Billings, MT*

Commission expires 4/1/2000

Signed 9/10/98 Suzanne K Wallenberg