



SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

Washington, DC 20423

Office of Environmental Analysis

May 30, 2013

sent via email

Martin.Sparhawk@aurizon.com.au

Martin Sparhawk
AURIZON
Level 5, 192 Ann Street
Brisbane, Queensland 4000
Australia

Re: Request for Data from Queensland Rail study, *Environmental Evaluation of Fugitive Coal Dust Emissions from Coal Trains, Goonyella, Blackwater, and Moura Coal Rail Systems*, issued January 2008

Mr. Sparhawk:

I am the Director of the Office of Environmental Analysis for a federal agency in the United States, the Surface Transportation Board. One of the Board's responsibilities is to license the construction and operation of new freight rail lines. Before deciding whether to approve the construction and operation of a new rail line, the Board must conduct an extensive environmental analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act.

We are currently in the early stages of preparing an environmental review of a proposed freight rail construction and operation in Montana. The purpose of the new rail line would be to transport low sulfur, sub-bituminous coal from Montana and then on to both foreign and domestic markets.

Stakeholders in the Pacific Northwest States of Washington and Oregon have expressed concern that this coal, as well as coal from mines in Wyoming, would travel through many communities en route to several Coal Terminal Ports that may be built in their states. These stakeholders have suggested that increased coal train traffic may result in the emission of coal dust in quantities substantial enough to adversely affect human health and the environment.

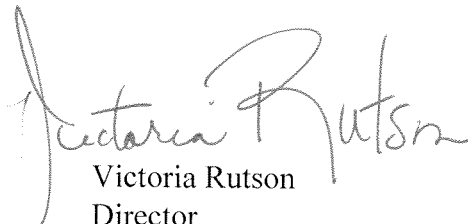
We have searched for scientific research regarding the emission of coal dust from moving trains, but have found limited existing information. Consequently, we were pleased to discover the Queensland Rail study, *Environmental Evaluation of Fugitive Coal Dust Emissions from Coal Trains, Goonyella, Blackwater, and Moura Coal Rail Systems*, prepared by Connell Hatch (now Aurecon Hatch), issued in January 2008. This study measured and

modeled concentrations of airborne particulate matter near rail lines and summarized the results of several previous studies.

We have been referred to you by Mr. Kerry O'Toole. We would appreciate your approval to contact the study authors to obtain further information on the study and to access the unpublished datasets compiled during the study and discussed in the January 2008 report. In addition, we would like to access similar data collected by Connell Hatch or other contractors during more recent studies, if any, for AURIZON or Queensland Rail on particulate emissions from coal trains.

Thank you for considering our request. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at rutsonv@stb.dot.gov. If you are able to provide the approval that we request, please provide a copy of your response to Mr. Ken Blodgett of my staff at 395 E Street, SW, Washington, DC, 20423, 202-245-0305 (e-mail address: Kenneth.Blodgett@stb.dot.gov) and to Mr. Alan Summerville of ICF International, our independent third-party contractor, at 9300 Lee Highway, Fairfax, Virginia, 22031, 703-934-3616 (e-mail address: Alan.Summerville@icfi.com). Please feel free to contact me at 202-245-0295, Mr. Blodgett, or Mr. Summerville if you have any questions or require additional information. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Victoria Rutson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Victoria" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Rutson".

Victoria Rutson
Director

Office of Environmental Analysis