



SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

Washington, DC 20423

Office of Environmental Analysis

January 12, 2015

Bonner County
Board of Commissioners
1500 Highway 2
Sandpoint, ID 83864

Re: FD 30186, Tongue River Railroad Company, Inc.—Rail Construction and
Operation—In Custer, Powder River and Rosebud Counties, Mont.

Dear Commissioners:

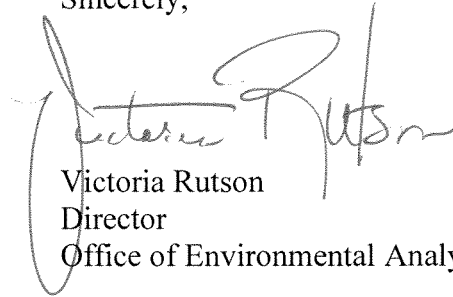
Thank you for your letter addressed to former Chairman Elliott and Members of the Surface Transportation Board regarding the Tongue River Railroad Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Because your letter raises environmental concerns, former Chairman Elliot asked me, as the Director of the Board's Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA), to respond on the Board's behalf.

OEA is responsible for conducting the environmental review process to ensure compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and related environmental laws as part of the Board's licensing process. OEA will address your concerns in the Draft EIS, which we anticipate issuing in the spring. At that time, we will solicit public comments and conduct public meetings. We have added your organization and address to the list of those who will receive the Draft EIS. The Draft EIS will also be posted on the Board's website (www.stb.dot.gov) and the project website (www.tonguerivereis.com). We have not yet determined the number and locations for the public meetings this spring.

After the close of the public comment period, we will prepare a Final EIS that responds to comments on the Draft EIS and makes recommendations to the Board, including recommendations for mitigation measures. In reaching its final decision whether to approve, deny, or approve with environmental mitigation conditions Tongue River Railroad's proposal, the Board will consider the Draft EIS, the Final EIS, and all environmental comments that are received.

Again, thank you very much for your letter. We have placed your letter and my response in the environmental record for this proceeding. If you have any questions or would like to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to call me at 202-245-0295 or Danielle Gosselin of my staff at 202-245-0300.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Victoria Rutson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

Victoria Rutson
Director
Office of Environmental Analysis