



SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

Washington, DC 20423

Office of Environmental Analysis

June 26, 2015

Board of County Commissioners
Missoula County, Montana
200 West Broadway
Missoula, MT 59802-4292

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

Dear Board of County Commissioners:

Thank you for your April 23, 2015 letter addressed to Former Chairman Elliot regarding the Tongue River Railroad Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Because your letter raises environmental concerns, Acting Chairwoman Miller 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 issued the Draft EIS on April 17, 2015 and announced that 10 public meetings would be held in the project area the week of June 8th-12th, and two public meetings would be held online on June 17th. The online meetings were intended for those people who were not able to attend the public meetings in the project area. Citizens from Missoula registered for the online meetings and also attended the meeting on June 9th in Miles City, Montana, and provided comments. If you have not already done so, we encourage you to submit written comments on the Draft EIS. Comments are due by August 24, 2015 and may be mailed to the attention of Ken Blodgett of my staff or filed electronically on the project website (www.tonguerivereis.com). The Draft EIS is available for viewing and downloading on the Board's website (www.stb.dot.gov) and on the project website.

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 initial "V" and a stylized "R".

Victoria Rutson
Director
Office of Environmental Analysis