



**SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD**  
*Washington, DC 20423*

*Office of Environmental Analysis*

April 26, 2013

sent via email  
[LCROSS@ARTC.COM.AU](mailto:LCROSS@ARTC.COM.AU)

Leanne Cross  
Environment Manager  
Australian Rail Track Corporation  
PO Box 10343  
Gouger Street  
Adelaide SA 5000, Australia

Re: Request for Data from Australian Rail Track Corporation pilot study, *PRP 4 - Particulate Emissions from Coal Trains*, issued September 2012

Dear Ms. Cross:

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.

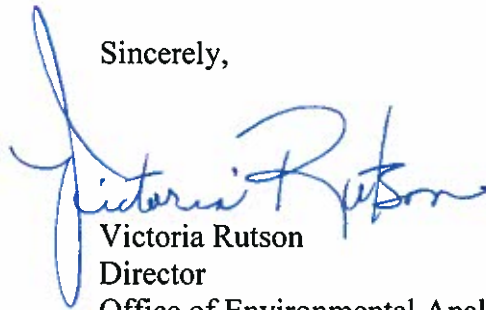
Stakeholders in the Pacific Northwest States of Washington and Oregon have expressed concern that this coal, as well as coal from mines in Wyoming, would travel through many communities en route to several Coal Terminal Ports that may be built in their states. These stakeholders have suggested that increased 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 ARTC pilot study, *Pollution Reduction Program 4 (PRP 4) – Particulate Emissions from Coal Trains*, issued in September 2012. The PRP 4 study measured concentrations of airborne particulate matter near a rail line used by Hunter Valley coal trains. The study's preparer, ENVIRON Australia Pty Ltd (ENVIRON), suggested that we ask your permission to access the

unpublished dataset compiled during the study and discussed in the September 2012 report. In addition, we would like to access similar data collected by ENVIRON, or other ARTC contractors (such as Katestone Environmental Pty Ltd) during more recent studies of particulate emissions from coal trains. ENVIRON expressed willingness to assist in providing this information to us if ARTC gives approval to do so.

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](mailto:rutsonv@stb.dot.gov). If you are able to provide the information that we request, you may 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](mailto: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](mailto: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,



Victoria Rutson  
Director

Office of Environmental Analysis