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Commenter: Tracy Eagle

Organization:

State: Colorado

Agency: Surface Transportation Board

Initiative: Tongue River Railroad

Submission Text

From: tracy eagle <tracymeagle@gmail.com>

To: blodgettk@stb.dot.gov

Date: 09/21/2015 01:12 PM

Subject: Regarding the Tongue River Railroad

Dear Mr. Blodgett,

Please accept the following comment on the draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Tongue River Railroad.

I am a former USEPA Region 8 Manager who has worked in the communities that will be affected by this proposed railroad. The more I learn the history of this proposal, particularly the intertwined business relationships of the beneficiaries of this railroad, the more concerned I've become.

I oppose construction of the Tongue River Railroad and urge the STB to take the "no action alternative." This railroad's sole purpose is clearly to haul coal from Otter Creek to export markets at a time when coal markets are crumbling. Arch Coal, part owner of the railroad and the owner of the Otter Creek lease, is in financial ruins. Montana ranchers, Northern Cheyenne tribal members, and community members down rail deserve better than to be sold down the river to a speculative railroad and mine.

The draft EIS wrongly assumes that there is a domestic coal market for high-sodium Otter Creek coal, and wrongly assumes that there will be no train traffic impacts from construction of a rail line that could generate

18-26 additional coal trains per day traveling on existing rail lines. Rail communities between the proposed railroad and Pacific Northwest export terminals would suffer the consequences of dramatically increased coal train traffic, including slashed property values, increased traffic congestion, safety hazards, and air pollution from both diesel exhaust and fugitive coal dust.

The only beneficiaries of the Tongue River Railroad will be executives from Arch and the Tongue River Railroad company. This is not in the public interest. Please choose the "no action alternative" for the Tongue River Railroad.

Sincerely,

Tracy M Eagle

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