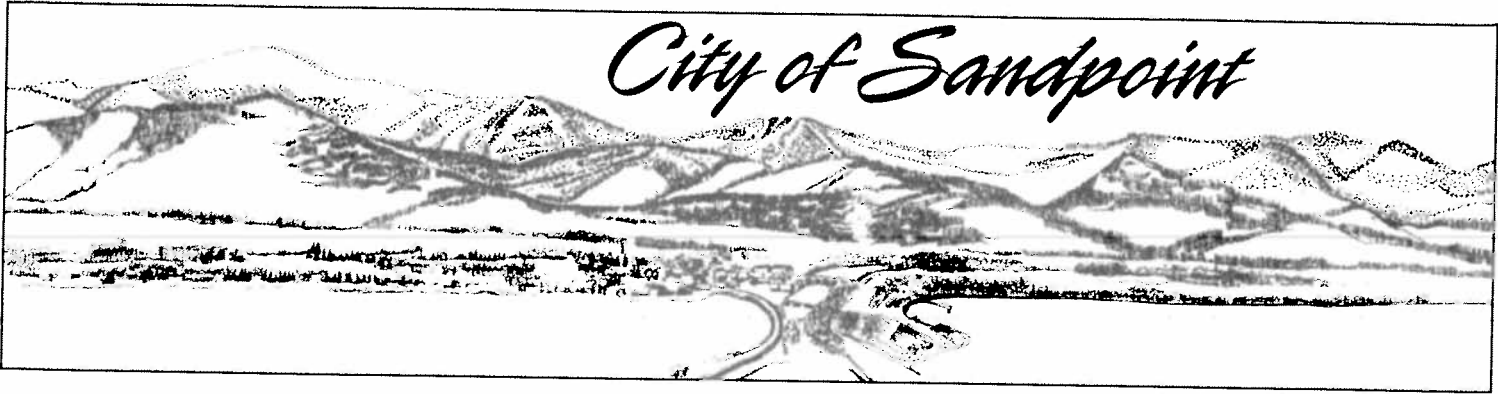




City of Sandpoint

September 18, 2014

Daniel R. Elliott, Chairman
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423

Subject: Request to include the City of Sandpoint in the review of the proposed Tongue River Railroad

Chairman Elliott and Members of the Surface Transportation Board,

It has come to our attention that the rail lines that traverse the City of Sandpoint could experience a substantial increase in train traffic from exporting coal from the Powder River Basin to proposed West Coast ports. We understand that the construction of the Tongue River Railroad would contribute significantly to this additional traffic, as it would connect the proposed Otter Creek coal mine to the existing rail lines.

Since these additional coal trains would impact the residents and visitors of Sandpoint by degrading air and water quality, increasing the frequency of traffic delays at crossings, delaying emergency response services, and threatening our local economy, we hereby request that the Surface Transportation Board (STB) consider the City of Sandpoint in your Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Tongue River Railroad and consult with us as the review process moves forward.

We have specific concerns related to increased rail traffic and believe that it is the responsibility of the STB – as the regulatory agency for the rail system – to step in and ensure that communities are not forced to bear the costs of expensive infrastructure upgrades to mitigate impacts (e.g. overpasses, underpasses, quiet zones). The City of Sandpoint lacks adequate funding for these projects, and we strongly believe these costs must be divided fairly between the railroad and taxpayers.

Please consider, and formally include, the City of Sandpoint as you move forward in the review process for the Tongue River Railroad.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Carrie Logan
Mayor

c: Deb Miller, STB Vice Chair
Ann D. Begeman, Board Member
Victoria Rutson, Director, STB Office of Environmental Analysis
U.S. Senators Mike Crapo and Jim Risch

RECEIVED SEP 22 2014

61 E. 3rd St. Sandpoint, ID 83864

COPY

No: 14-48

Date: September 17, 2014

RESOLUTION
OF THE CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF SANDPOINT

TITLE: A REQUEST TO THE SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD THAT IT INCLUDE THE CITY OF SANDPOINT IN THE TONGUE RIVER RAILROAD ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS AND REQUIRE THE RAILROAD(S) TO SHARE THE COSTS OF NECESSARY INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

WHEREAS: The City of Sandpoint, with a population of approximately 7,500, funnels all rail traffic from Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF), Union Pacific and Montana Rail Link (MRL) railroads;

WHEREAS: The route through the City of Sandpoint represents the easiest way to transport coal from Southeast Montana to the West Coast;

WHEREAS: Arch Coal's proposed Otter Creek Mine in Southeast Montana, the largest proposed new coal strip mine in the contiguous United States, is designed to supply coal to West Coast coal export terminals;

WHEREAS: The proposed Tongue River Railroad (TRR), which is jointly owned by Arch Coal, BNSF, and Forrest Mars, Jr., would be the conduit for transporting coal from Otter Creek to the existing MRL/BNSF line;

WHEREAS: Building the Otter Creek Mine and Tongue River Railroad would therefore lead to increased coal train traffic through the City of Sandpoint, contributing to more frequent traffic delays and increased emergency response times at the at-grade crossings, higher levels of air and noise pollution and degradation of water quality from lost coal and coal dust;

WHEREAS: These impacts will affect the health, public safety, and quality of life of our residents and require infrastructure upgrades to mitigate impacts, such as overpasses, underpasses, and quiet zones;

WHEREAS: The City of Sandpoint lacks the funding to pay for necessary infrastructure projects and will be required to seek public funding for private benefit;

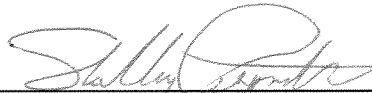
WHEREAS: The Surface Transportation Board (STB) is the sole agency responsible for regulating railroads and has committed to consider the TRR's impacts to down-line communities and the entire rail system in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Tongue River Railroad; and

WHEREAS: The STB has the established authority to require railroad companies to help mitigate the cost of infrastructure improvements necessitated by new rail construction.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT: The City of Sandpoint believes that building the Tongue River Railroad would affect the health and well-being of Sandpoint residents and require expensive infrastructure projects for which the City lacks adequate funding.

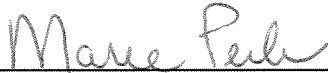
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT: The City of Sandpoint formally requests that the Surface Transportation Board consult with the Mayor of Sandpoint to properly assess coal train traffic impacts during the Tongue River Railroad EIS process.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT: The City of Sandpoint requests the Surface Transportation Board utilize the Tongue River Railroad proceeding to ensure that the costs of increased train traffic are shared fairly by railroad companies and not borne principally by community taxpayers.



Shelby Rognstad, City Council President
on behalf of Mayor Carrie Logan

ATTEST:



Maree Peck, City Clerk

City Council Members:

		YES	NO	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
1.	Eddy	X			
2.	Rognstad	X			
3.	Aitken				X
4.	Williamson	Second	X		
5.	Camp		X		
6.	Fragoso	Motion	X		