

Re: FD-35952

Mr. Frank Patton's request to pause the environmental study

Good Morning Ms. Rutson, Mr. Blodgett,

Mr. Frank Patton's recent request for a pause in the environmental study to prepare his application to construct and operate the proposed GLBT rail is puzzling to me. As recently as this summer Mr. Patton was quoted as saying that an application would be filed 3-6 months after the July 15 deadline.

Mr. Patton's request is vague at best, there is no elaboration why GLBT cannot prepare for the EIS and the application at the same time. More obviously missing is the length of the pause requested.

It is my expectation that the STB will deal with Mr. Patton's request in an open and transparent manner as required by the NEPA. Clarification of the letter is in order and should not be done via telephone conversations between the STB and Mr. Patton. I expect that if any such conversations took place or face to face meetings were held that the STB would provide transcripts of these promptly and without further asking.

As you are aware the public opposition to this process is overwhelming. Individuals, legislators and groups have asked for a new Public Comment period in response to the September 20, 2016 "new preferred route" submission by GLBT. They want the opportunity to be heard before you proceed with the Draft Scope of Study. We have not yet received an official Public Comment Period but are promised one after you completed your Draft Scope of Study. Yet we are told that we can comment now even though there is no official comment period.

The submission of a new route, the verbal assurance that the public can comment even though there is no official comment period and now this request for a pause combined with an already confusing process with which the public is not familiar make it impossible to effectively communicate and participate as the NEPA encourages the public to do.

A temporary suspension (whatever 'temporary' means in this case) could only mean a few things, either Mr. Patton wants to slow down the oppositions momentum, or he is woefully unprepared to submit a formal application and needs much more time to shore up support for it. Neither of these are acceptable reasons to grant "a temporary suspension".

Kind Regards,

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